THE PERCEPTIONS OF A GROUP OF SESOTHO MOTHERS, FROM A LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUP IN THE FREE STATE, ON EARLY LITERACY

by

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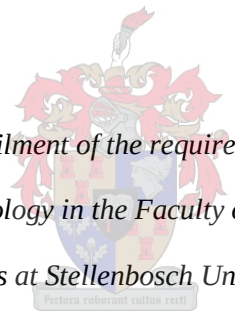

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

South Africa's education system is under scrutiny regarding the continuous poor reading performance of pupils in primary schools. South African Grade 4 and 5 pupils continue to score below the international average of reading achievement. Poor reading skills have a negative influence on the attainment of knowledge and limit opportunities later in life. Research has indicated that the foundation phase of literacy development, known as early literacy or emergent literacy, plays an important role in literacy outcomes. Research has demonstrated that children of parents from non-mainstream cultural and linguistic groups and who have a low socio-economic status, seem to be at risk for compromised literacy achievement. Little research has addressed parental perceptions regarding early literacy, particularly perceptions within specific cultural and linguistic groups. The study aimed to address this need. A qualitative research design, guided by an ethnographic approach was followed. The main aim of the study was to describe and explain the perceptions of a small group of Sesotho speaking mothers, from a low socio-economic group in the Free State, regarding early literacy. The data was collected making use of 12 standardized open-ended interviews, combined with an interview guide approach. The data was analysed using a thematic analysis process, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). Three central themes relating to the participants' perceptions of early literacy were identified in the data. Education was viewed by most mothers as an escape from poverty and the key to a successful life. Poverty was identified as the greatest barrier to home literacy practices and had a direct influence on the resources available in the home environment. The participants held varying perceptions regarding early literacy differences within specific groups of people, such as rich and poor; young and old; and Black and White. The participants also discussed their perceptions regarding early literacy from a cultural point of view. Limitations of the study are discussed, as well as recommendations for future research. The results have wide-ranging implications for practice. Professionals, such as speech-language therapists play a vital role in identifying and serving children at risk for compromised literacy development, while government departments play a key role in the promotion of early literacy, better education and improved living conditions for all South Africans.

Key words: early literacy, perceptions, Sesotho, low socio-economic status, qualitative interview.

UITTREKSEL

Suid-Afrika se onderwysstelsel word ondersoek na aanleiding van die voortdurende swak leesvermoë van leerlinge in primêre skole. Suis-Afrikaanse Graad 4 en 5 leerlinge presteer voortdurend onder die gemiddelde internasionale vlak van leesvermoë. Swak lees vermoeëns het ‘n negatiewe invloed op die verkryging van kennis en beperk geleenthede in die latere lewe. Navorsing het bewys dat die grondslag fase van lees ontwikkeling, bekend as vroeë geletterheid, ‘n baie belangrike rol speel in geletterdheid resultate. Navorsing het getoon dat kinders van ouers uit nie-hoofstroom kulturele en taal groepe en met lae sosio-ekonomiese status, geneig is tot ‘n risiko om prestasie in terme van geletterdheid, in gedrang te bring. Min navorsing is gedoen aangaande ouer persepsies van vroeë geletterdheid kennis, spesifiek met betrekking tot persepsies in spesifieke kulturele en taal groepe. Die doelwit van die studie is om hierdie behoefte aan te spreek. ‘n Kwalitatiewe navorsingsplan, gepaardgaande met n etnografies uitganspunt is gevolg. Die hoofdoel van die studie was om die persepsies van n klein groep van 12 Sesotho moeders, afkomstig van lae sosio-ekonomiese groepe in die Vrystaat, te beskryf en te verduidelik aangaande vroeë geletterdheid. Die data was saamgestel deur die gebruik van gestandardiseerde openhartige onderhoude, gekombineerd met n onderhoudsriglyn benadering. Die data was geannaliseer deur gebruik te maak van n tematiese ontledingsproses, soos beskryf deur Braun en Clarke (2006). Drie sentrale temas wat verband hou met die deelnemers se persepsie van vroeë geletterdheid was in hierdie data geidentifiseer. Onderwys onderrig was deur die deelnemers gesien as n ontvlugting uit armoede en die sleutel tot n suksesvolle lewe. Armoede was geïdentifiseer as die grootste struikelblok vir geletterdheid aktiewiteite in die ouerhuis en het ook n direkte invloed op die hulpmiddels in die ouerhuis omgewing. Die deelnemers het verskeie persepsies aangaande vroeë geletterdheid in verband met verskillende groepe mense, soos ryk en arm; jonk en oud; en Swart en Wit. Die deelnemers het ook hulle persepsies aangaande vroeë geletterdheid, vanuit n kulturele perspektief bespreek. Tekortkominge van die studie is beskryf, asook aanbevelings vir toekomstige navorsing. Die resultate het wyd verspreide implikasies vir die praktyk. Professionele beroepe, soos spraak-en-taal terapeute, speel ‘n baie belangrike rol in identifisering en dienslewering aan kinders wat die gevaar loop van geletterdheid ontwikkeling in gedrang te bring, terwyl regeringsdepartemente ‘n baie belangrike rol speel in die bevordering van geletterdheid kennis, beter onderwys onderrig en beter lewensomstandighede vir Suid-Afrikaners.

Sleutelwoorde: vroeë geletterheid, persepsies, Sesoto, lae sosio-ekonomiese status, kwalitatiewe onderhoud.

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1. INTRODUCTION

"…few individuals are more powerful in framing beliefs about literacy than parents and other family members" (Gadsden, 1992, p. 328).

Early literacy has received much attention in the fields of Education and Speech-Language Therapy in the past two decades, with different focus areas in the respective professions. Researchers have focussed on the home literacy environment and the role of parents in facilitating early literacy (Roberts, Jurgens & Burchinal, 2005; Haney & Hill, 2004; Phillips, Norris & Anderson, 2008), the link between low socio-economic status and early literacy development (Duncan & Seymour, 2000; Swafford, Wingate, Zagumny & Richey, 2015), the relationship between early literacy and academic success (Lonigan, Burgess & Anthony, 2000; Hogan, Catts & Little, 2005; MacDonald & Cornwall, 1995) and various models of early literacy intervention (e.g. Justice & Kaderavek, 2004).

Only recently have researchers started to investigate and report on parent and teacher perceptions regarding early literacy (e.g. Dobbs-Oates, Pentimonti, Justice & Kaderavek, 2015; Torr, 2008; Kummerer, Lopez-Reyna & Hughes, 2007; Sanden, 2012; Weigel, Martin & Bennett, 2006; Gillanders, McKinney & Ritchie, 2012) which can assist in achieving a holistic understanding of psycholinguistic data pertaining to early literacy and thereby provide more effective interventions for at-risk children.

In comparison with children from other countries, South African children consistently score below average on measures of reading (Mullis, Martin & Kennedy, 2007; Mullis, Martin, Foy & Drucker, 2012). The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is an international comparative study in which South Africa participated in 2006 and 2011. PIRLS aims to guide countries to make informed decisions about reading education by providing internationally comparative data about reading achievement in Grade 4 and over time identifying long-term trends. The trends are monitored on a 5 year basis (Mullis et al., 2007).

In 2011, a new assessment tool, prePIRLS, was designed for countries whose performance did not meet international standards in 2006. In South Africa close to 20 000 pupils in Grades 4 and 5 took part in PIRLS 2011. Pupils in Grade 4 took part in prePIRLS in all eleven official languages, while pupils in Grade 5 participated in PIRLS in either English or Afrikaans. In the PIRLS 2006 study, which formed the baseline for South African reading achievement in Grade 4, South African pupils scored lowest out of 40 countries. Approximately 80% of pupils did not reach the Low

International benchmark[1], indicating that they had not mastered basic reading skills. Internationally, only 6% of children did not reach the Low International benchmark (Mullis et al., 2012).

Since 2011 was the first year in which South African Grade 4 pupils took part in the prePIRLS, this assessment formed a new baseline. Only Botswana, Colombia and South Africa participated in prePIRLS and therefore the data comparisons are limited. South African Grade 4 pupils scored lower than both their Botswanan and Colombian counterparts (Mullis et al., 2012).

Grade 4 pupils taking part in prePIRLS (2011) who wrote in English (30% of pupils writing in home language) and Afrikaans (90% of pupils writing in their home language) scored significantly higher than pupils who wrote in African languages. The selection criteria for participation in PIRLS 2011 stated that the language of the test was determined by the language in which pupils had been taught in during the first four years of schooling. In South Africa this meant that not all Grade 4 pupils were tested in their home language but rather in the Language of Learning and Teaching they had been exposed to in the first three years of schooling. In the group of pupils who wrote the prePIRLS test, 71% wrote in their home language. The main exceptions were pupils writing in English and Sepedi, with 70% and 46% respectively having a home language different to the language of the test (Mullis et al., 2012). This finding suggests that children who speak African languages as home language and who receive their primary education in their home language are particularly at risk for poor literacy skills and consequently, academic failure.

The findings of the PIRLS (2006, 2011) studies indicate that South Africa is facing an enormous education crisis and an immediate turn-around strategy is needed. Furthermore, strategies with a particular focus on reading literacy, that were put in place after the PIRLS 2006 results were released have been ineffective since there was no overall difference in performance in 2011 (Mullis et al., 2012).

What is most concerning about South African children's poor reading achievement is the fact that literacy is not a confined area of education to be mastered and forgotten about; rather literacy is the key to all other areas of formal education (Kellett & Dar, 2007). Poor literacy can limit

[1] The Low International benchmark is defined by PIRLS as a basic level of reading.

opportunities at school and later in life- both economically and in terms of enjoyment of the written word (Kellet, 2009).

South African homes have on average fewer literacy resources compared to many countries that participated in the PIRLS 2011 assessment. In PIRLS 2011, pupils presented with higher reading achievement if their parents reported that they themselves liked reading, if their parents often engaged with their children in literacy activities, if they had more literacy and learning resources in their home and if their children had attended pre-primary education (Mullis et al., 2012).

Furthermore, a relevant issue to address in South Africa is that of bi- and multilingualism, with multiple factors to consider, such as the home language environment, the home versus crèche/school language environment and exposure, as well as the perceptions of African languages as literate languages. These factors are likely to influence maternal literacy behaviours and the adult literacy model which children are exposed to.

De Witt (2009) was involved in a baseline study of five provinces in South Africa, which formed part of the South African government's literacy campaign (Read Educational Trust) that was launched to increase reading ability among learners. The results of de Witt's (2009) study clearly indicate that the quality of many of South Africa's preschool programmes is below standard. Data collected from observations of 70 sites revealed astonishing results: at 54 of the 70 sites, no storybooks were available to learners, thereby limiting exposure to the written word. The books that were available were predominantly English and not the first language of the children. There was also a general lack of availability of resources and equipment for quality teaching. Only 28 of the 70 sites qualified with regards to basic resources and equipment necessary for quality teaching. It is thus easy to understand why caregivers at only 19 of the 70 sites read story books to learners on a daily basis. The qualitative results of the study reveal that most of the teaching facilities were unsuitable for young children. Basic health and safety practices were not apparent and health standards could not be maintained. At a number of sites toilet facilities were not available for young children. Overcrowding was evident at most of the sites.

De Witt's (2009) study highlights how alarming and urgent the situation in South African pre-primary and primary education is. Unless preventative measures are taken to improve the literacy rates of South African learners, learners will continue to score poorly in literacy tasks in comparison to their international peers and later academic success will be hindered. As Wamba (2010) maintains, a strong foundation in literacy provides children with greater access to a diverse

curriculum. A poor foundation in literacy therefore limits a learner's access to further knowledge and understanding and limits their opportunities later in life.

Motivation for the study

Britto & Brooks-Gunn (2001), after exploring the link between family literacy environments and the early literacy skills of low-income, African-American preschool and school-aged children, concluded that research needs to be conducted regarding the family literacy environment within its social and cultural context. Furthermore, Britto & Brooks-Gunn (2001) suggest that future research avenues include investigating parental beliefs and attitudes towards literacy as possible impacting factors on the family literacy environment. Similarly, the need for research in the early literacy domain is stressed by Orellana, Monkman & MacGillivray (2002) who maintain that researchers need to "gain an in-depth understanding of how beliefs about literacy and schooling are shaped within and across different social contexts, in relation to the resources that are available to people at any given point in time" (p.1). In light of the authors' suggestion, and in relation to the South African context, it is imperative that researchers address such perceptions not only in different social contexts, but within the various cultural and linguistic groups within South Africa. Many non-mainstream groups in South Africa are not well researched and for that reason the researcher aimed to investigate early literacy perceptions of a group of Sesotho mothers, living in a low socio-economic area in Bloemfontein.

An important focus area in Speech-Language Therapy is early literacy. Information pertaining to the parental perceptions of early literacy development within South Africa's different cultural and linguistic groups is an essential component to understanding the early literacy development and experiences of South African pupils who are particularly at risk for poor literacy achievement. The current study can make a contribution to the fields of Speech-Language Therapy and childhood education by seeking to understand the perceptions regarding early literacy, among a group of Sesotho-speaking mothers with a low socio-economic status and indicate which factors may place their children at risk for poor early literacy skills and later poor academic achievement. Once these risk factors are identified, measures of prevention can be developed and implemented in collaboration with the Department of Education. The information gained from the current study will also assist with the design of culturally and linguistically appropriate early literacy assessment tools and intervention programmes, which can be implemented in the preschool years as a measure to prevent poor early literacy skills and possibly later poor academic achievement. Certain aspects of the knowledge gained from the current study may be transferrable to other low income populations, as well as non-mainstream groups in South Africa. Although the results should not be

generalized to other populations, the mothers' perceptions may assist therapists and educators working in contexts similar to the research setting in better serving their clients.

Research question and objectives

The present study aims to describe the perceptions of early literacy among a small group of mothers belonging to the Sesotho language group of South Africa. The understandings and perspectives of different cultural and/or linguistic groups need to be taken into consideration when attempting to promote successful literacy acquisition (Smylie, Williams & Cooper, 2006).

The main aim of the study is to describe and explain a group of Sesotho mothers' perceptions regarding early literacy. To achieve the main aim, I attempted to answer the following questions:

1.) What are the mothers' reading habits and attitudes towards literacy?
2.) What are the mothers' perceptions regarding the development of literacy in their pre-school children aged 4-6 years?
3.) What are the mothers' perspectives regarding the relationship between culture and early literacy?
4.) What are the mothers' attitudes towards their children's education?

Research design

The study has a qualitative research design and is thus a form of naturalistic inquiry. Naturalistic inquiry studies real-life situations as they emerge naturally and is viewed as an approach with no prior expectations of what the results will be. Qualitative designs are naturalistic as researchers attempt to understand and explain a phenomenon that unfolds naturally (Patton, 2002).

The current study was guided by an ethnographic approach. Vidich & Lyman (2000, p. 38 as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 81) define ethnography as a "social scientific description of a people and the cultural basis of their peoplehood". Ethnography seeks to describe and interpret the culture of a group of people (Patton, 2002). During the study, the researcher attempted to describe and explain the perceptions of a group of Sesotho-speaking mothers from a low income group, towards early literacy. Ethnography involves observations of a group of people, during which the researcher becomes immersed in the daily lives of the group and observes and interviews participants. Becoming immersed in the lives of participants was beyond the scope of this study and for that reason the researcher stresses that the study was not purely ethnographic, although the study was guided by ethnography. Using this approach, the researcher conducted interviews, until the data was

saturated. Saturation is the point where no more information seems to be gathered by continuing the interview process (Creswell, 2007). The researcher was able to conduct twelve interviews before reaching a point of saturation.

Patton (2002) describes the purpose of qualitative interviewing as gaining entry into the perspectives of others. "Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit" (p. 341). During the data collection phase, the researcher made use of a standardized open-ended interview, combined with an interview guide approach. The researcher made use of two different interpreters, of which one was present at each interview. The role of the interpreters is discussed further in the methodology in section 3.2. The interview guide approach ensures that the main questions are asked of all the participants, while the combined approach gives the interviewer flexibility within the individual interviews to probe further and to determine when it is appropriate to explore certain matters in greater detail. The interviewer therefore has the freedom to pose questions about new areas of inquiry not originally foreseen during the instrument's development stage. Interviews which make use of open-ended questions and probes encourage in-depth responses about participants' perceptions and experiences (Patton, 2002). The use of open-ended questions assists the researcher not to limit or direct a participant's answer. Open-ended responses received from the participants allow the researcher to understand the world as viewed by the participants (Patton, 2002).

Following data collection, qualitative researchers attempt to interpret what they "see, hear and understand" (Creswell, 2007, p. 39). In the current study, the researcher aimed to understand and explain the perceptions of a group of Sesotho mothers from a low socio-economic area in Bloemfontein, South Africa regarding early literacy.

The following chapter provides an overview of the literature in the field of early literacy. The researcher then presents the methodology, followed by the results and discussion and thereafter the conclusion of the study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The South African education system is under increasing scrutiny regarding the poor literacy achievement of pupils. In international comparison, South African pupils continue to score significantly below the standard achievement rate on measures of reading (Mullis et al., 2007; Mullis et al., 2012).

Although the national government seemed satisfied with the 75, 8% matric pass rate in 2014, the figure represents only 36, 4% of children in that age group who were in Grade 2 in 2004 (Nyathela, Dwane & Louw, 2015). In essence, an estimated 63, 6% of South Africans who were in Grade 2 in 2004 did not receive their senior certificate (some pupils complete matric in later years due to illness, pregnancy, financial reasons or earlier academic failure).

Due to this discrepancy between the statistics of pupils starting school and those passing matric, Spaull (2014) suggests that a true reflection of school success is gained by dividing the number of matric pupils who pass by the number of pupils who began school 12 years prior, which yields a cohort matric pass rate. (Spaull uses Grade 2 figures due to excess repetition in Grade 1.) Assessing the matric class of 2013, Spaull (2014) states that the cohort matric pass was only 40%. Although the national government reported a matric pass rate of 78, 2%, this figure did not take into account that in every 100 pupils who started school, only 51 pupils wrote matric; 40 of those pupils passed matric and 16 of the 100 pupils received university entrance. Furthermore, Spaull (2014) comments that, sadly, the pupils not reaching their matric year are those who contribute to the 50% unemployment rate among the South African youth (18 – 24 years old). The South African government has continued to inject financial and educational resources into the Grade 12 school year, but has failed to acknowledge the crucial development that occurs in a child's early years.

The following quotation regarding early childhood development and stimulation highlights how crucial the early years are in forming the foundation for future success:

"*Young children who receive the right preparation during their early development are equipped with basic life skills that assist them in later life. When these basic building blocks are absent, the effects of the delayed development in the early years can adversely affect the ability of the young child to reach his or her full potential later in life. Early Childhood Development (ECD) is a comprehensive approach to policies and programmes for children from birth to 9 years of age, with the active participation of their parents and caregivers. Its purpose is to protect the child's rights to*

develop his or her full cognitive, emotional, social and physical potential." (Social Development, 2014, p. 10).

Sadly, the right preparation is many times absent or partially absent in South African children's early years, which is likely a contributing factor to the country's continued poor literacy achievement and in later school years, poor academic achievement. The South African education crisis demands action in the form of research into the homes and schools of South African children, as well as the need for ECD policy reconstruction. For this reason, the study will focus on the home situation and will investigate the early literacy perceptions of a group of Sesotho-speaking mothers living in a low income area.

Research in the field of early literacy in South Africa has focussed predominantly on day care centres and crèches (ECD, 2014), classroom situations (Bloch, 1999) and teachers' perceptions and practices (Hodgskiss, 2007). Although research regarding early literacy perceptions and practices in South African homes has been minimal, some research has been conducted internationally (for example Lynch, Anderson, Anderson & Shapiro, 2006; Fitzgerald, Spiegel & Cunningham, 1991; Walker, 2004) which can be drawn on by South Africans to perform quality research in this area.

The first part of the literature review deals with the broader context of the study; examining the construct of early literacy and the various definitions of early literacy available in the literature, as well as the theoretical framework for the study. Furthermore, the influence of culture and poverty on literacy development is addressed. The researcher then discusses literacy development and perceptions thereof. Next, the home literacy environment is discussed, followed by perceptions of mothers' and teachers' roles in early literacy development. Lastly, a brief discussion regarding the unique situation in South Africa is presented.

2.1 Conceptual framework: defining the construct of early literacy

Numerous definitions exist in the literature for the construct of *early literacy*; some reflecting a holistic view and others a developmental model. Definitions reflecting a holistic view state that early literacy skills are the developmental precursors which prepare a child for conventional literacy (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Sulzby & Teale, 1991; van Kleeck, 1998). The holistic view of early literacy began in the 1960's when Dolores Durkin wished to understand why some children could read upon school entry, while others could not. She found a common thread amongst the group of children who could read at school entry: these children engaged in pretend reading and writing and had parents or guardians who read to them. Her findings suggested that learning to read does not

begin at a particular age, but rather that certain behaviours lead a child to understanding the process of reading (Fisher, 2008). Clay (1979 as cited in Fisher 2008) demonstrated how children develop book knowledge, including where to begin reading on a page and the concept of what a word is. Clay's observations proved that "preschool children are learning about the function and form of literacy in their daily lives, long before their first experiences of formal literacy teaching" (Clay, 1967, p. 116 as cited in Wray, Soler, Harrison, Clark & Dombey, 2007). These various behaviours that prepare a child to learn to read before formal instruction were collectively termed *emergent literacy*[2]. Clay became a pioneer in the field of emergent literacy; demonstrating that children do not wait to be instructed, but rather approach the written world with an enquiring mind (Wray et al., 2007).

By the 1990's, researchers were moving away from the emergent literacy or "readiness" perspective and leaning towards a developmental perspective of early literacy, as proposed by Sénéchal, LeFevre, Smith-Chant & Colton (2001). According to the developmental model emergent literacy should be viewed separately from oral language[3] and metalinguistic skills[4]. Within this model the definition of early literacy is limited to conceptual and early procedural knowledge of reading and writing (Kennedy et al., 2012). Conceptual knowledge refers to children's knowledge of the physical acts of reading and writing and includes their perceptions of themselves as literate beings, while procedural knowledge "includes letter name, letter sound knowledge and some word reading" (Kennedy et al., 2012, p. 43).

Although consensus surrounding the different emerging literacy models has not been reached, Justice and Kaderavek (2004) have outlined the key areas of early literacy, which include *phonological awareness,* knowledge of *print concepts*, *alphabet knowledge* and *literate language*. The authors stress that gaining success in these areas is crucial for a smooth shift from pre-reading to reading. Phonological awareness refers to the "ability to reflect on and manipulate the sound patterns of words" (Kennedy et al., 2012, p. 124). Phonological awareness is an umbrella term for a

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[2] The terms early literacy and emergent literacy are used interchangeably in the study

[3] Oral language refers to all oral forms of communication, for example, speaking and listening (Snow, 1983)

[4] Metalinguistics refers to the ability to conceptualise language, to treat language as a cognitive object and to possess knowledge about the way in which language is constructed and used (Whitehurst and Lonigan, 1998).

range of skills, including awareness of words, rhyme awareness, awareness of syllables, sensitivity to onset and rime (for example, '*cat*' can be segmented into the onset /c/ and the rime /at/) and awareness of the individual sounds within words or phonemic awareness (for example, '*cat*' can be segmented into three sounds /c/, /a/ and /t/) (Kennedy et al., 2012). Knowledge of print concepts refers to the knowledge of the organisation of print, which includes the relationships between written language units and the terminology that is used to describe print. Children learn about print concepts from an early age through observation and interaction with their written and reading environment, including family and preschool teachers (Sulzby & Teale, 1991). Alphabet knowledge refers to knowledge of the specific features of letters and names of individual letters in upper- and lower-case formats (Justice & Kaderavek, 2004). Alphabet knowledge includes familiarity with the visual shape of letters (Adams, 1990) and is not merely a recital of the alphabet, but rather identification of letters in isolation (Kennedy et al, 2012). Literate language refers to a child's use of a specific oral language register (Dickinson & Moreton, 1991; Olson, 1977; Snow, 1983 as cited in Pellegrini, Galda, Flor, Bartini & Charak, 1997). Literate language consists of a denser, more specified use of words and multifaceted syntactic forms than oral language (Benson, 2009). The process of literacy development will now be discussed; firstly the development of reading, followed by the development of writing skills.

2.2 Literacy development

Chall (1983) proposed six stages in the development of reading, namely pre-reading or "pseudo-reading" (stage 0), initial reading and decoding (stage 1), confirmation and fluency (stage 2), reading for learning the new (stage 3), multiple viewpoints (stage 4) and construction and reconstruction (stage 5).

Stage 0 takes place from approximately six months to six years of age and includes a child's pretending to, or mimicking of the act, of reading or storytelling. During this stage a child plays with literacy materials such as books and pencils, learns to recognise some common environmental signs (for example, traffic signs or shop names) and learns to print their name (Chall, 1983). A number of developmental milestones occur in stage 0, which lay the foundation for successful reading. These developmental milestones, or prerequisites for reading, fall under the umbrella term *early literacy*. As previously discussed, these skills include phonological awareness, knowledge of print concepts, alphabet knowledge and literate language (Justice & Kaderavek, 2004). Many of these foundation skills continue to develop during the first stage, which takes place at roughly six to seven years of age. During the first stage of reading development, also known as the alphabetic phase, a child's focus is placed on the decoding of simple words, such as the relationship between

letters and sounds as well as printed and spoken words (Chall, 1983). The most challenging aspect of this stage is the involvement of metalinguistics for the integration of the sound and writing systems (Owens, 2001). In stage two, at approximately seven to eight years old, most children have acquired the sound-symbol knowledge, syllabic knowledge and word knowledge to become competent readers (Owens, 2001) and begin to read simple familiar stories (Chall, 1983). Stage three, developing between ages nine and thirteen (Chall, 1983), marks the shift from decoding the written word to comprehension of the written word (Owens, 2001). The reading of increasingly more complex text takes place and the goal of reading is to gain new knowledge (Chall, 1983). In stage four, developing roughly between fifteen and seventeen years, higher cognitive skills, such as inference (interpretation and prediction) and the acknowledgment of multiple points of view assist reading comprehension (Owens, 2001). By stage five, reading serves both a professional and personal role (Chall, 1983) and "the adult is able to integrate what is read into his or her current knowledge base and make critical judgments about the material" (Owens, 2001, p. 401).

In a very simplistic definition, literacy refers to the processes of reading and writing. However, there is only a moderate overlap between the two processes and the systems become differentiated at approximately three years of age (Owens, 2001). Four phases have been proposed in the development of writing, namely preparation, consolidation, differentiation and integration (Kroll, 1981 in Owens, 2001). In the preparation phase, a child learns the physical characteristics of handwriting by imitating an adult's writing actions. The consolidation phase correlates roughly with the chronological age of seven years. In this phase, the child's written language is similar to spoken language and includes more informal use of language. During the differentiation phase, occurring at approximately ten years of age, speech and writing become differentiated and a child's writing adopts its own grammatical features. The integration phase is only reached by a minority of mature writers. During this phase, writing and speech has become integrated, allowing a reflection of the writer's personality when appropriate (Owens, 2001).

The development of reading and writing is a complex process, requiring the complete attention of a child at each phase, since the phases of development interact with and rely on each other. It is important to distinguish between the development of reading and writing and the cognitive processes thereof. The processes of reading and writing will now be discussed respectively.

2.3 The processes of reading and writing

Two major theoretical views exist to explain the reading process, namely the bottom-up and top-down approaches; representing extremes on a continuum (Owens, 2001). The bottom-up theory views reading as the translation of written elements (Perfetti, 1984 in Owens, 2001) and represents

a "letter-by-letter approach" to understanding reading (Kennedy et al., 2012, p. 74). The bottom-up model views reading as the flow of information from printed symbols (letters), to phonemes (auditory input), to a lexical level (vocabulary) and lastly a textual level, where comprehension takes place (Kennedy et al., 2012; Owens, 2001). However, the bottom-up model fails to explain how the visual memory system, phonological memory system and semantic[5] memory systems interact with one another (Kennedy et al., 2012).

In contrast, the top-down model places emphasis on the role of context in confirming new words to the reader (Kennedy et al., 2012). The top-down model proposes that a reader creates hypotheses about the text which is based on the reader's current knowledge base, the content of the text and the syntactic[6] structures featured (Owens, 2001). Although context is useful for assisting in the confirmation of new word meanings, the top-down model does not explain how the reader identifies words (Kennedy et al., 2012).

Adams (1990) proposed an interactive model of reading composed of four processors- the context processor, meaning processor, orthographic processor and phonological processor, which function in collaboration to provide the reader with information. The orthographic processor receives information directly from the printed page. If the word is known to the reader, the meaning processor is activated. If the word is not known, the reader may require support from the phonological, context or meaning processors (Kennedy et al., 2012). The interactive model of reading proposes that the bottom-up and top-down models are both activated, either simultaneously or alternately (Aebersold & Field, 1997 in McRae, 2012).

Written language is not merely a reproduction of oral language. The grammatical structures in speech and writing are initially very similar but children display less success with the written form (Owens, 2001). Writing generally does not reflect features of speech past nine or ten years old and at this time becomes more mature than oral language, "reflecting linguistic performance that is closer to linguistic knowledge" (Owens, 2001, p. 402). Writing is more formal and complex than speech and by the ages of twelve to thirteen, the sentence structure in writing exceeds that of the syntax reflected in speech (Gillam & Johnston, 1992 in Owens, 2001). Although research has

[5] Semantics refers to a system of rules used to interpret words and word combinations (Owens, 2001).

[6] Syntax refers to the rules that govern the structure of a sentence (Owens, 2001).

granted a substantial amount of attention to understanding the reading process, writing cannot be omitted from the equation since it forms a major part of the literacy process as a whole. The effects of poverty on literacy will now be discussed.

2.4 The effect of poverty on literacy

Research has found many links between poor academic success, and education as a whole and low socio-economic status (Croll, 2002; Akhtar & Niazi, 2011; Polidano, Hanel & Buddelmeyer, 2013). Furthermore, many researchers have found a link between poor literacy skills and low socio-economic status (Duncan & Seymour, 2000; Pretorius & Naude, 2002; Snyder & Dillow, 2013).

Parental involvement in children's education is likely to be limited in situations of poverty (Motala & Luxomo, 2014), probably due to a combination of factors. Poverty often forces parents to focus on meeting their children's basic needs: safe housing, food and clothing, while still dealing with the stress of their circumstances (Hammer in Ball, Müller & Nelson, 2014). Families who struggle financially also face challenges when trying to encourage their children's language and literacy development, as families living in poverty often find it difficult to view education as a priority or, as Neuman (2001) suggests, their physical and social conditions do not support early literacy and education. It is likely that the physical and social conditions that Neuman (2001) refers to includes low maternal educational levels.

In light of the issues surrounding poverty and literacy, Pretorius & Naude (2002) assessed the reading and writing readiness of five-and-a-half to seven year old children from an informal settlement in South Africa and found that only 36, 7% of the sample could turn a book into the correct position and open it as if they were going to read it. Only 43, 3% of the sample knew that the words in a book tell the story. The authors believe these results indicate that underprivileged children growing up in low socio-economic circumstances in South Africa have had very little experience with handling books. The authors maintain that it may be due to a lack of books and literacy objects in the home, because the parents themselves are illiterate or because of a lack of proper preschool education. Darling (2004) maintains that in homes where parents lack basic literacy skills, children are less likely to have access to reading and writing material, to have opportunities for education outside their home and are also less likely to be enrolled in preschool. These children also have less opportunity to observe adult role models engaging in literacy activities. Kellett (2009) is in agreement with the perspectives of Darling (2004) and maintains that the poor literacy achievement among children from low socio-economic areas is due to a lack of opportunities for literacy practices, such as adults reading with children, adult role

modelling of reading and talking about books. The current literature suggests that low socio-economic status places children at an increased risk for literacy delays and therefore suggests a need for further investigation in the area of early literacy, such as the study of parental perceptions and practices.

Since phonological awareness is a crucial prerequisite for the development of reading, researchers have paid attention to phonological awareness skills in the low socio-economic population. For example, McDowell, Lonigan & Goldstein (2007) examined predictors of phonological awareness, including age and socio-economic status. Results indicated that differences were found on most of the phonological awareness predictors (including rhyme and synthesis and analysis tasks), where children from lower socio-economic backgrounds were outperformed by children from higher socio-economic backgrounds. Similarly, Noble, Wolmetz, Ochs, Farah, & McCandliss (2006) investigated whether the relationship between phonological awareness and reading is consistent within all socio-economic groups. The authors examined three measures of reading namely non-word reading, single word comprehension and reading comprehension. It was found that higher socio-economic status was generally linked with higher performance at the given phonological awareness levels. In addition, the link between low phonological awareness and low decoding skills was multiplied in a low socio-economic environment.

These findings indicate that children being raised in environments with low socio-economic status may be at risk for later reading difficulties and suggest the urgent need for research in low-income populations in South Africa. The term "at risk" includes children brought up in homes where literacy experiences are infrequent (Justice & Kaderavek, 2004). Due to the high poverty rates in South Africa, early intervention programmes should be targeting preschool children from low socio-economic areas and specifically those in non-mainstream cultural and linguistic groups. Following, the home literacy environment will be discussed, particularly in relation to low socio-economic status.

2.5 The home literacy environment

In recent years, much research (Roberts, Jurgens & Burchinal, 2005; Haney & Hill, 2004; Phillips, Norris & Anderson, 2008) has focused on understanding the home literacy environments of children and the role of parents in facilitating early literacy development.

Maternal responsiveness and the quality of parent-child interactions seem to play a role in the development of early language skills. Roberts et al. (2005) investigated how four measures of

home literacy practices, as well as a measure of the quality and responsiveness of the home environment during preschool years would predict language and literacy skills between 3 and 5 years of age. The measures of home literacy practices included shared book reading frequency, maternal book reading strategies, child's enjoyment of reading and maternal sensitivity to the child. The authors found that the overall responsiveness and support of the home environment was the strongest predictor of the children's language and early literacy skills. Similarly, sensitive parenting, maternal responsiveness and adult feedback have been shown to predict a range of early language skills (Hirsh-Pasek & Burchinal, 2006; Tamis-LeMonda, Bornstein & Baumwell, 2001; Tomasello & Farrrar, 1986 in Forget-Dubois, Dionne, Lemelin, Pérusse, Tremblay & Boivin, 2009). Factors such as instability of resources, low incomes and poor housing can have a negative impact on the literacy practices parents engage their children in, as well as the time and resources allocated to their children (Coleman, 1988 & Conger & Conger, 2002 in Ball, Müller & Nelson, 2014). These factors may negatively affect maternal responsiveness resulting in a negative impact on early language and literacy skills. Many of these factors are present in a large percentage of South African homes where poverty is a daily struggle, suggesting that these "at-risk" children may require direct intervention services from a very young age.

An additional factor to consider as playing a role in the quality of the home literacy environment is parental marital status. Although most research on this topic seems to have focussed on single-parent homes in the White, middle-class population (Barajas, 2011), it can be assumed that with the additional stress of poverty, the effect of single parent households on children's literacy development and learning may be even worse in the low socio-economic population. Bain, Boersma & Chapman (1983 in Barajas, 2011) found that Grade 3 children from fatherless homes performed significantly worse in reading achievement than their Grade 3 peers who had fathers present in the home environment. Research by Arnold, Zeljo & Doctoroff (2008) found that single parents were more likely to be less involved in their children's schooling. These results have implications for the South African context as many households in South Africa are manged by single parents. Such factors have also not been adequately addressed in the literature which has focussed on perceptions regarding early literacy within different cultural and linguistic groups.

Foster, Lambert, Abbott-Shim, McCarty & Franze (2005) propose that children's early literacy and social outcomes are likely to be affected by the home literacy environment and social risk factors. The authors proposed and tested specific models assessing the effects of socio-economic status, social risk and home learning experiences on early literacy and social functioning of children aged 42 to 76 months. The home learning environment was measured in terms of whether primary caregivers read to their children, promote learning experiences, provide specific learning activities

and have books and literacy materials in the home. The authors conclude that "home learning experiences enhanced children's performance on emergent literacy measures, but such experiences also positively impacted young children's social development, though less strongly" (p. 30), once again highlighting the link between positive home literacy experiences and successful mastery of early literacy skills.

The research literature indicates many positive associations between the home literacy environment and children's early academic skills. For example, Christian, Morrison & Bryant (1998) investigated the role of parents' literacy promoting behaviours on children's early academic skills and found that the home literacy environment was positively associated with measures of reading recognition[7], receptive vocabulary, letter recognition and general information[8]. In addition, the authors found that children coming from homes where there was a low level of maternal education, and whose parents received low scores on the Family Literacy Environment Scale, were at risk of poor academic skills (measured by reading recognition, receptive vocabulary, letter recognition, general information and mathematics achievement) upon school entry. However, on a separate statistical analysis, children in the low maternal education/high family literacy[9] group scored higher on all the measures of academic achievement, as opposed to children in the high maternal education/low family literacy group, implying that the home literacy environment was a greater predictor of academic skills upon school entry than socio-economic status[10]. The results also have implications for South African children from low socio-economic areas as it seems that the home literacy environment may, to some extent, buffer the effects of low socio-economic status.

Parental perceptions of early literacy will now be discussed.

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[7] In this study, reading recognition refers to children's recognition of letters and word decoding skills, as measured by the Peabody Individual Achievement Test-Revised.

[8] In this study, general information refers to children's knowledge of their culture, also measured by the Peabody Individual Achievement Test-Revised.

[9] Family literacy refers to parents' and children's relationships with reading, writing and problem solving before and during the formal schooling years (Wasik, 2001 as cited in Gadsden, 2002).

[10] In Christian, Morrison and Bryant's (1998) study, maternal education was used as an index of socio-economic status.

2.6 Perceptions of early literacy

It is not only a child's home literacy environment that plays a crucial role in the development of literacy, but also parents' perceptions regarding different aspects of literacy; such as the development of literacy, the roles of parents, caregivers and teachers in terms of early literacy exposure; as well as parental attitudes and beliefs about education.

It seems that there is a relationship between parent's literacy beliefs and the activities they engage their children in to facilitate literacy development in the home. Lynch, Anderson, Anderson & Shapiro (2006) examined the literacy beliefs and behaviours of 35 parents of preschool children. Unfortunately, the authors do not comment on the socio-economic status of the parents. All the parents were living in an urban area in Western Canada. All the parents had completed high school and more than half had completed some form of secondary training. The group of parents represented many different cultures, including East Asian Canadians, South Asian Canadians and Mexican Canadians. All the parents spoke English and 71% of the parents spoke another language. Their results indicated that parents' level of education influenced their early literacy beliefs and subsequently had an influence on literacy behaviours. Parents with more education were likely to have more holistic views of literacy and were less likely to teach literacy skills directly. Parents with less education tended to have a skills-based approach to literacy. Justice & Kaderavek (2004) explain that explicit teaching of emergent literacy skills, or a skills based approach is more decontextualized, less naturalistic and features greater adult input and control than embedded or holistic methods of teaching. Explicit teaching directs a child's focus to a range of emergent literacy skills through structured opportunities occurring on a regular basis. The results from the study of Lynch et al. (2006) imply that parental education level should be taken into account when examining early literacy beliefs, as parental education level seems to correlate with parents' approach to facilitating early literacy.

In addition, research providing information regarding parental perceptions of the role of the schools and the teacher may assist in understanding parents' literacy behaviours and, in turn, design effective early literacy intervention services in South African early childhood development centres. Hammer, Rodriguez, Lawrence & Miccio (2007) performed research with Puerto Rican mothers of bilingual children and found that many mothers hold the belief that schools are responsible for their children's education and that the mother's role is to teach them to be obedient and to respect

teachers. However, parents in both groups[11] of the study also held progressive views, believing that parents should teach children new skills and children should be encouraged to have their own points of view. Nevertheless, parents' perceptions regarding the role of teachers are likely to influence their home literacy practices.

Lastly, maternal perceptions of early literacy are likely to be influenced by a range of socio-linguistic factors, such as bi- and multilingualism in the home and pre-school environments and the perceptions of African languages as literate languages, or mainly as oral / communicative languages. These factors are likely to influence maternal literacy behaviours, however there is a gap in the South African research regarding the effect and influence of sociolinguistic factors on maternal literacy behaviours.

The next section addresses literacy through the lens of culture.

2.7 Early literacy and the influence of culture

Hammer et al. (2007) report that a number of studies have established that literacy practices are rooted in cultural models, implying that members of certain cultural groups hold shared beliefs, goals and strategies that guide their actions with regards to their children's literacy development. These findings imply that parents' beliefs and practices may vary between cultures. In South Africa, particular care should be taken in schools where potential differences may exist between school and family cultural models. Baker et al. (1996) believe that the home literacy environments of children from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and cultural groups need to be understood in order to assist teachers in reaching their goal of being responsive to children's individual needs. Similarly, Hammer et al. (2007) maintain that educators and therapists need to have an understanding of the beliefs and practices of the parents they serve, and learn how the family's cultural model may differ from the school's model of literacy development.

After collecting and analysing ethnographic data from 3 different communities in the United States of America, Heath (1982) concluded that a single uniform model of language acquisition cannot adequately explain culturally diverse gains in knowledge. Heath (1982) therefore proposes that knowing more about the alternative ways in which knowledge and cognition is gained in different

[11] Parents were divided into two groups for the purpose of the study. The first group had exposed their children to Spanish and English from birth while the second group began English exposure at the age of three.

sociocultural situations will assist the school system to provide appropriate learning opportunities for both mainstream and non-mainstream communities. Heath's proposal is now more relevant in South Africa than ever before and motivates the need for studies such as this one, which describe the perceptions of non-mainstream communities.

Prinsloo & Stein (2004) comment that literacy is a social practice determined by language and other cultural factors, which implies that literacy should be studied in relation to culture. In order for the South African Education system to understand and accommodate various cultural models of literacy, investigations need to be conducted in which researchers explore different cultural perspectives regarding literacy. Educators need an understanding of the different cultures they serve and the education system at a management level needs to develop multilingual and culturally appropriate literacy materials, which will serve all cultural groups in South Africa.

Although sociocultural theory cannot be viewed as the only theory to adequately explain literacy development, it is useful to understand the influence and role of culture and social interactions in the literacy development process. Since the 1920s, literacy acquisition has been a central focus of the sociocultural theory and a sociocultural approach to literacy emerged from the more general sociocultural theory (Warschauer, 1997).

Sociocultural approaches to learning are based on the principle that human activity takes place within cultural contexts. Vygotsky was of the opinion that sociocultural settings are the main component in the development of higher cognitive activities including "voluntary attention, intentional memory, logical thought, planning and problem solving" (Turuk, 2008). Vygotsky claimed that humans make use of tools with which they can act upon the physical world. These tools, according to Vygotsky, are artefacts (symbols or signs) created by humans within a specific culture and time in history. The tools are modified as they are passed from generation to generation and move through different historical periods. Warschauer (1997) comments that the tools themselves (for example computers, writing or language) are significant due to the way in which they transform human action. This concept of mediation, the view that all human activity is mediated by tools (Wertsch, 1991 in Warschauer, 1997), helps theorists to understand the importance of certain tools in the practice and development of literacy.

The following chapter deals with the methodological aspects of the research study.

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology used during the processes of data collection and data analysis. A description of the participants who took part in the study is included. The sampling methods that were utilised are discussed, followed by a description of the materials and instruments used during data collection. Thereafter a description of the data analysis process is provided and lastly, the ethical aspects that were considered throughout the study are highlighted.

3.1 PARTICIPANT INCLUSION CRITERIA

To qualify for participation in the current study, it was required that participants meet the following criteria:

- All participants had to be living in the informal settlement area of Bloemfontein in the Free State province of South Africa. This was due to the researcher having access to the community, as well as convenient public transport routes for the participants between their homes and the researcher's place of employment on the outskirts of the settlement;
- All participants needed to be mothers, who currently had one or more children between the ages of 4 and 6 years. The participants' descriptions of their perceptions can therefore be regarded as current;
- All participants needed to be first language Sesotho speakers, with some proficiency in English or Afrikaans as interviews could only be conducted in English or Afrikaans by the researcher, or in Sesotho by an interpreter;
- All children of the participants needed to present with case histories that did not indicate impairments in speech-, language- or physical development, as parents who have children with a developmental delay or disorder may have different perceptions regarding literacy, compared with parents whose children are developing typically;
- The participants should have an education level of at least Grade 7 (completion of Grade 7) as level of education is likely to influence perceptions of early literacy. Grade 7 was decided upon as pupils have mastered a certain level of literacy by this time in their schooling career. Specifying a minimum education level also ensured a degree of homogeneity among the participants.

3.2 PARTICIPANT SELECTION PROCEDURE

Qualitative research typically focusses in depth on small samples that are selected purposefully to be information-rich and will assist in answering the researcher's main aims (Patton, 2002). Patton

(1990, as cited in Williamson, 2006) notes that the strength of purposeful sampling is embedded within the researcher's ability to find *information-rich cases*. The first few participants (including the participant who took part in the pilot study) were selected by a key informant, who is a registered nurse in the Paediatric Clinic at the public hospital where the researcher is employed (and who also acted as an interpreter in the study). The hospital is a tertiary level hospital which serves the community from which the participants were selected. Key informants are people who are knowledgeable about the inquiry setting (community) and are useful in helping the researcher understand what s(he) cannot experience (Patton, 2002). The registered nurse was considered a key informant as she had been employed at the hospital for several years and had built a good rapport with members of the community. She was a long-time resident of the community and was knowledgeable regarding its cultural beliefs.

The participants selected formed a relatively homogenous sample, as the researcher aimed to describe the perceptions of a small subgroup of people. The researcher provided the key informant with the selection criteria, which were also explained to her. Upon identifying an information-rich participant who she considered to fulfil the selection criteria, the key informant assisted the participant in filling out the "relevant biographical information" form (Please refer to Appendix A.) The researcher then screened the completed forms to ensure that participants met all criteria before scheduling interviews. After the first four participants were selected by the key informant, they were asked to put the researcher in contact with additional participants who fitted the subject selection criteria. At this point in the research, snowball sampling was used to locate information-rich cases. The aim of snowball sampling is to locate new participants via recommendation from participants already enrolled in the study (Patton, 2002). Once a recommendation was made, the possible participant was contacted telephonically by the key informant. During this telephonic contact, the key informant obtained the description of the participant and the child/children's case history. If the individual's information fulfilled all the criteria for the study, the individual was contacted telephonically to arrange an interview. Snowball sampling only assisted in obtaining an additional three participants and the researcher then found another key informant to assist further. The second key informant was the matron of the Neonatology ward at the hospital where the researcher is employed. She was able to assist in obtaining five participants who fitted the criteria for the study. She was regarded as a key informant as she is a well-known and well-respected member of the community, from which the participants were recruited.

3.3 PARTICIPANTS

Participants were 12 Sesotho speaking mothers from an informal settlement in Bloemfontein. The area can be classified as low socio-economic and it was a previously disadvantaged area during South Africa's apartheid years. Demarest, Reisnet, Anderson, Humphrey, Farquhar and Stein (1993) maintain that socio-economic status of a family is based on the overall income, parental education level, parental occupation and social status in the community. When taking into consideration maternal monthly income, the participants' education level and participants' occupations, the majority of the participants would be classified as living in low socio-economic circumstances.

The ages of the participants ranged between 23 years and 38 years. Five of the participants had successfully completed their secondary education (Grade 12). Of this group of participants two were unemployed, two were employed at the hospital where the researcher worked and one was a student, enrolled in her 3rd year of nursing training. Of the remaining 7 participants, none were currently employed. Four had completed Grade 11, two had completed Grade 10 and one had completed Grade 9. All mothers reported being first language Sesotho speakers. Their second language was a combination of Afrikaans, English and/or Setswana, with the exception of participant A, whose second language was isiXhosa.

The number of children the participants had ranged between 1 and 3, with most participants reporting having only 1 child. All of the participants reported having home circumstances where the number of persons residing at the home was more than the number of rooms in the home. Only two of the participants were married. The remaining 10 participants reported being single. Whether this meant living with a life partner is unknown. Maternal monthly incomes among the participants varied between the child grant of R330 and R9 100.

3.4 PARTICIPANT DESCRIPTION

Table 3.4.1 provides a summary of the information gained from the participants during the initial contact session with the key informant:

Table 3.4.1

Description of participants

Partici-pant	Mother's age	Mother's education level	Mother's first language	Mother's second language	Mother's occupation	Nr of children	Age of children	Nr of rooms in house	Nr of people living in the house	Marital status of mother	Maternal monthly income
A	31	Grade 11	Sesotho	isiXhosa	Unemployed	1	4 years	5	3	Single	R330 (child grant)
B	25	Grade 12	Sesotho	English/ Setswana	Unemployed	1	6 years	2	4	Single	R330
C	28	Grade 11	Sesotho	Afrikaans	Unemployed	1	5 years	2	3	Single	R330
D	24 years	Grade 12 General Nursing diploma	Sesotho	Setswana	Student	1	6 years	4	8	Single	R2000 (bursary)
E	26 years	Grade 11	Sesotho	Afrikaans	Tutor: School for ASD	3	4 years	2	4	Single	R330
F	31 years	Grade 12 PCA	Sesotho	English	PCA	2	7 years 4 years	2	4	Married	R6000 (mother)
G	34 years	Grade 9	Sesotho	English/ Setswana	Unemployed	2	11 years 6 years 7 months	2	4	Single	R990 (3 x child grant)
H	35 years	Grade 11 Basic Education program	Sesotho	English	Unemployed	2	5 years 2 years	2	5	Single	R660 (2 x child grant)
I	25 years	Grade 10	Sesotho	English	Unemployed	3	9 years 5 years 2 years	2	1	Single	R990 (3 x child grant)
J	23 years	Grade 12 Mechanical engineering , BAA, welding	Sesotho	English/ Setswana	Unemployed	1	4 years	5	2	Single	R330 (child grant)
K	27 years	Grade 10 HIV/AIDS counselling Couples counselling	Sesotho	Afrikaans	Unemployed	2	7 years 4 years	2	5	Single	R330 (child grant)
L	38 years	Grade 12 Nursing aid	Sesotho	English/ Setswana	Nursing Aid	1	11 years 4 years	3	7	Married	R9100

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study proposal was submitted to and approved by the Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at the University of Stellenbosch (Reference number: **N10/05/140**). Please refer to Appendix B for the letter of approval from the Ethics Committee. Approval was also obtained from the researcher's employer for the use of office space for the interviews. This letter is not included as an appendix as the hospital's identity will be revealed.

All participants were required to provide informed consent (Please refer to Appendix C for English and Sesotho copies of the informed consent documents) prior to participating in the interview with the researcher. The informed consent form addressed the purpose of the study, reasons for invitation to participate in the study, responsibilities of participants, and benefits for participants, possible risks, participants' rights throughout the study and confidentiality. The informed consent form stressed that participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without suffering any negative consequences (Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee, 2006) and that their identity, as well as the identity of their children, place of work and the identity of any individuals they mention during the interview will be protected. Informed consent was obtained from participants during the initial contact between the key informant (who also acted as an interpreter) and the participant. The form was available in English and Sesotho, which allowed the participant to read the form in the language with which they felt most comfortable. The participants were contacted by the interpreter or researcher to find a suitable day and time for the interview. The participant's informed consent was discussed again prior to the interview on the day that the interview took place.

Since the participants required transport to reach the hospital where the interviews took place, the researcher reimbursed them with the transport fare upon completion of the interview.

A number of ethical issues may arise when making use of interpreters for data collection purposes and the researcher has attempted to acknowledge and address these issues. Unfortunately, ethical dilemmas can arise from having interpreters from the same community as the participants. The researcher stressed the importance of the confidentiality of participants to the interpreters. Furthermore, during the interpreter training, the researcher highlighted crucial aspects of interpreting and qualitative interviewing, such as absolute refraining from coercing participants to give specific answers.

According to Babbie (2010) confidentiality is achieved when the researcher can identify a participant's responses but will refrain from identifying the participant publically. The identity of participants was respected by assigning letters of the alphabet (beginning with "A") to the participants, which was used throughout the research process to refer to the relevant participants. This practice ensures confidentiality of participants, should someone other than the researcher perform the transcriptions. Participants' identities will be protected should any papers submitted to academic journals, or presentations be made at conferences or other meetings. The names of institutions that participants are associated with will also not be mentioned.

Since the researcher made use of an audio recorder during the interviews, participants were informed about the measures which the researcher intended to take to ensure the protection and safe-keeping of the interview recordings, i.e. that the recorder was stored at the researcher's residence within a safe. After the first draft of the study was submitted, the researcher deleted the interviews from the recording device. Participants were informed before the interview about the purpose of the audio recorder and reminded that they have the right to turn off the recorder at any point during the interview.

3.6 MATERIAL AND EQUIPMENT

The instrument used to obtain the information that the researcher was seeking was an interview guide. The interview guide was designed by the researcher and guided by the 2011 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (Mullis et al., 2012) carried out by The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). Although the PIRLS assessment tool was not of a qualitative nature, the researcher gained valuable insight from the tool as to what areas of inquiry to include in the design of the interview guide. Assistance from a specialist in the field of early literacy in South Africa was received, as well as guidance from an expert in the field of qualitative interviewing. These measures have increased the credibility of the instrument. The interview guide, consisting of 34 questions followed a logical sequence of themes correlating with the sub-aims of the study. Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2006) note that questions can either seek factual information or opinions. In the current study, the researcher's main aim was to gain information regarding mothers' perceptions of early literacy; therefore questions eliciting mothers' opinions, descriptions and explanations of their customs regarding early literacy were included in the interview guide. Open-ended questions were used in the interview guide as they allow participants the freedom to answer questions in as much detail and complexity as they wish (Bless et al., 2006).

The interview guide addressed five important issues: 1.) Mother's schooling, literacy abilities and literacy habits, 2.) Development of reading and writing, 3.) Home literacy environment, 4.) Culture, literacy and education and 5.) The mother's attitudes towards literacy and education. Please refer to Appendix D to view a copy of the interview guide. A literature study of parents' perceptions and practices regarding early literacy, as well as the PIRLS 2011 assessment tool assisted the researcher to decide which themes to include in the interview guide. Section 1, addressing the mother's schooling and literacy abilities and habits consisted of seven questions. This information was necessary as mothers' educational backgrounds and experiences may strongly influence their opinion regarding education and literacy (Bus, 2001). The second section consisted of three main questions and five follow-up questions, addressing mothers' perceptions regarding literacy development. Mothers' perceptions regarding literacy development may influence the foundation phase of a child's literacy development, otherwise known as early literacy skills. The aim of this study was to describe how low-income, Sesotho speaking mothers perceived children's literacy development, as well as their own roles in that process. Section 3 addressed the home literacy environment and consisted of five questions. Clay (1998 as cited in Lynch et al., 2006, p. 2) states that "children's knowledge about literacy at school entry is important for their early literacy success". Since the quality of a child's preschool years is seen to lay an important foundation for later years, information regarding the home environment is essential in understanding and explaining success, or lack thereof, in early literacy. Section 3 provided valuable information regarding the mothers' early literacy interactions with their children, as well as the alignment of early literacy perceptions and practices. The forth section addressed culture, literacy and education. It is essential that different cultural perspectives regarding literacy are understood as the construct of literacy includes the event, the text and also the culturally based theories of reading and writing (Barton, 1994; Cairney, 1998; Street, 1995 as cited in Duke & Purcell-Gates, 2003). It is crucial that perceptions among different cultural-linguistic groups in South Africa, regarding early literacy are studied. The fifth and final focus of the interview guide was the mothers' attitudes towards literacy and education. Research has found that certain parental attitudes, such as placing importance on education and having high expectations for their children have been related to superior school performance (Stevenson & Lee, 1990 as cited in Christian et al., 1998). To understand the participants' perceptions and practices regarding literacy, it was also important to investigate this aspect.

An Olympus digital voice recorder (VN-733PC) was used to record the semi-structured interviews. Patton (2002) notes that use of a recording device increases the accuracy of data collection and also allows the researcher to be more attentive to the participant during the interview process since

extensive note taking is not required. Patton (2002) also feels that each interview is an observation and if an interviewer cannot focus on the interviewee then the interactive nature of an in-depth interview is negatively affected. Patton (2002) stresses that a recorder does not necessarily rule out the need for note taking during the interview as notes can assist the interviewer to formulate new questions as the interview progresses and facilitate later analysis of the data. For this purpose the interpreter was responsible for note taking during the interview.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION

The interviews with the participants followed the standardized open-ended format, combined with the interview guide approach. The researcher aimed to access the perceptions of the participants, regarding early literacy.

The participants were interviewed by the researcher, together with a Sesotho interpreter who translated when participants felt they could not express themselves in English or Afrikaans or when the researcher felt that more probing was necessary. An advantage of using the interview guide approach is that the researcher is able to use probes when necessary. Probes are defined by Patton as "follow-up questions" (p. 372) and are designed to delve deeper into the participants' responses and perceptions, as needed, after the initial question has been posed and answered. Patton (2002) suggests using probes during interviews to increase the depth of the data, as well as to provide participants with cues as to the depth of answers required. Detail-orientated-, elaboration- and clarification probes were utilized during interviewing. Detail-orientated probes are questions used to allow the researcher to obtain a comprehensive representation of the participants' experiences and perceptions. Elaboration probes can be verbal or non-verbal and signal to the participant to keep talking. Clarification probes were used to gain more information or clarify any ambiguous answers (Patton, 2002).

The interviews took place in the researcher's office at a public tertiary hospital in Bloemfontein, after working hours. The hospital is close to the area in which participants are living, thus making it the most practical setting for data collection. The participants were responsible for arranging their own transport to and from the hospital.

Interpreter A, who was also a key informant, is a retired registered nurse who is highly respected among colleagues at the tertiary hospital. She is a first language Sesotho speaker and also fluent in English and Afrikaans. She qualified as a staff nurse in 1977. Between 1977 and 2001 she worked at various hospitals in the Free State area. In 2001 she joined the Paediatric ward at the tertiary

hospital (then regional). From 2007 to 2014 she was managing the paediatric out-patient clinic at the hospital. Her managerial skills and friendly persona enabled her to achieve a reputable status in the community, which was ideal for the role of a key informant and interpreter.

Interpreter B was required to be present at 8 interviews after Interpreter A became ill. Interpreter B, also a first language Sesotho speaker, is a retired African languages lecturer from a reputable university. It was felt that his credentials and persona made him a suitable candidate to take over the interpreting role.

Patton (2002) cites a number of authors (e.g. Brislin et al., 1986; Stewart, 1985; Casse & Deol, 1985; Harris & Moran, 1979) to indicate that cross-cultural interviewing adds complexity to the interviewing process, as the likelihood of misunderstandings is increased. The situation becomes more risky when a language barrier exists and an interpreter must be used. Patton (2002) stresses that "special and very precise training of translators is critical" (p. 392). For this reason, the researcher, with input from an expert in the field of cross-cultural communication, compiled a training programme focused on the art of interpreting in the health care field for the purpose of training the interpreters before the interviews took place. The training was based on the work and recommendations by Ellis (2004), Díaz-Duque (1982), Gudykunst (2003), Parry (2004 as cited in Tjale & de Villiers 2004) and Swartz (1998). The interpreters were required to work through the training material in the form of self study and thereafter complete an oral examination of their knowledge (Please refer to Appendix E for a copy of the training material). After successful completion of the oral examination, it was required that the interpreters be present at every interview to translate questions or to step in and provide clarification when a participant did not understand a question in English or Afrikaans; or in some cases, when the researcher felt that the participant did not sufficiently answer the question. The interpreters were also required to interpret answers for the interviewer when participants chose to answer in Sesotho. The interpreters were then also required to transcribe the Sesotho sections of the interviews verbatim. However, due to health issues, Interpreter A was unable to complete the written translations of the first four interviews for which she was present. Two of the four interview transcripts, which required a percentage of translating, were then handed over to Interpreter B. The transcriptions of the other two interviews, conducted only in English and transcribed by the researcher, were cross-checked with the recordings by Interpreter B. Interpreter B was present at the remaining 8 interviews and was responsible for the translation of transcriptions, as well as transcribing the English portions of the 8 interviews. He was also responsible for checking the accuracy of the translations of all 12 interviews by ensuring correlation between the written transcriptions and the recordings. The

interpreters were compensated for their services at a market-related rate. Both interpreters assisted with the research out of free will and were not coerced into participating. A total of twelve interviews were conducted with an average length of 35 minutes. It is estimated that 40% of the data had to be translated.

3.7.1 Pilot study

Prior to commencing with data collection, a pilot study was conducted. A pilot study is defined as a feasibility study and it also provides the opportunity to pre-test the research instrument (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). In the current study, the purpose of the pilot study was to pilot the interview guide in terms of wording of the questions, order of the questions and identification of any repetition. After the pilot study, the researcher made slight changes to the interview guide. Most changes related to specificity of questions. Later in the research process, the researcher used the pilot study transcription to test the thematic analysis process prescribed by Braun and Clarke (2006). It was found that this thematic analysis method would be a suitable data analysis method for the current study.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Patton (1990) states that interpretation and analysis of raw data involves finding patterns, linking statements made in different places and finally integrating participants' responses and conveying the essence of the data to the reader. The researcher attempted to do so throughout the data analysis phase. Creswell (2007) maintains that there are certain core elements within qualitative data analysis: coding the data or reducing data into meaningful segments, linking codes into themes and, lastly displaying the data and making comparisons within graphs or tables. In phases 3 and 4 of the data analysis process the researcher made use of tables in a Microsoft Word document. Please refer to Appendix E and F for the tables pertaining to phases 3 and 4 respectively. These three main elements are evident in the data analysis process described below.

In the current study, the data analysis process was inspired by Braun and Clarke (2006) who consider thematic analysis a useful method in most qualitative research studies. Thematic analysis is the main form of data analysis used in ethnography (Scott-Jones & Watt, 2010). Tesch (1990) describes thematic analysis as an interpretive method during which data are searched for patterns which lead to an analysis of the phenomenon being studied.

Phase 1 in the data analysis process is **familiarisation with the data**. The researcher became immersed in the data and was thereby able to become acquainted with the data. Immersion usually

involves repeated reading of the data and marks the starting point for finding patterns and themes. Similarly, Patton (2002, p. 440) discusses the familiarization process and advises researchers to "get a sense of the whole" by reviewing the quality of the information collected. He also advises the researcher to do as many interview transcriptions as possible as this provides an opportunity to become immersed in the data and this process usually aids developing insights.

Transcription of the interviews forms part of phase one of the data analysis. Transcription is the transition point between data collection and data analysis and also forms part of the data management process (Patton, 2002). Some researchers have described transcription as "a key phase of data analysis within interpretive qualitative methodology" (Bird, 2005, p. 227 as cited in Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher and the interpreters were responsible for transcribing the interviews verbatim, of which approximately 66% of the data was transcribed by Interpreter B, an estimated 16% by the researcher and 18% by Interpreter A. During the transcription process the researcher and interpreters did not alter the data in any way, attempting to present it as truthfully as possible. In order to check the reliability of the transcriptions and improve the quality of findings, all of the transcribed and translated Sesotho data were checked by Interpreter B. This process is advised by Guest, Namey & Mitchell (2012) who recommend cross checking of data when researchers are working with a less common language or dialect. A true cross-check was not possible due to the scarcity of Sesotho translators. However, Interpreter B was responsible for checking the correlation of the interview transcript with the audio recording, as well as reviewing any translations that took place. The checking by Interpreter B can be regarded as a measure for increasing the credibility and confirmability of the data.

Phase 2 of the data analysis involved **generating initial codes**. Codes should isolate a semantic or latent feature of the data that is interesting to the analyst and related to the aims of the study and could potentially form the foundation of repeated patterns in the data set. Semantic features of the data refer to the form and meaning of what was said, while the latent features of the data go beyond the semantic content and try to examine underlying ideas and assumptions. Braun & Clarke (2006) explain that coding can be data-driven or theory-driven. Data-driven themes will depend entirely on the data, while theory-driven themes are generated when the analyst approaches the data with specific questions in mind. In the current study, the themes generated were data-driven. The coding for the data set in the current study was done manually (without a software programme) while working with Microsoft Word on a personal computer. A table was created in a Word document with two columns. The first column was used to copy and paste data extracts from the

transcription and the second column was used to code the data extract with a word or phrase that best described the data extract. This coding process was followed for each interview transcript.

Phase 3 involved **searching for themes**. Phase three began when all the transcriptions had been initially coded and a long list of different codes was identified. During phase three the researcher worked at the broader level of themes, rather than codes. Boyatzis (1998, as cited in Patton 2002) maintain that "pattern recognition" (p. 452) is an ability that a researcher must develop in order to use thematic analysis. Boyatzis defines pattern recognition as "the ability to see patterns in seemingly random information". Similarly, Chenail (2012) maintains that to become competent in qualitative analysis, the researcher must be able to reflect upon the coded data at hand until an evidence-based statement can be made about the interviews. In essence, Chenail (2012) is referring to the recognition of themes and patterns within the data. During this phase, codes were organized into potential themes and the relevant coded data extracts were arranged within the identified themes. At this point, the researcher started to analyse the codes and consider how codes could be combined to form themes. Once again, a table created with a Microsoft Word document was used to generate themes. During phase three the researcher began to focus on the relationship between codes, between themes and relationships at different levels, such as the sub-themes within main themes. Phase three was completed when a list of candidate themes and subthemes had been created, together with the data extracts relating to them.

Phase 4 involved the **reviewing of themes**. Phase four begins with the revising of the set of candidate themes. During this phase, themes are refined at two levels, namely at the level of the coded data extract and then again at the level of the entire data set. At the first level, all the extracts for each theme were read and the researcher considered whether these extracts formed a coherent pattern. If so, then the researcher moved on to the second level of refinement. If the candidate themes did not form an organised pattern, the researcher considered if the theme itself was problematic or if some of the data extracts did not fit in, in which case the theme was reworked. Once the candidate themes captured the essence of the coded data then the researcher moved to level 2 of phase 4.

At level 2 the researcher evaluated the credibility of individual themes in relation to the entire data set. In phase 4, the data set was re-read for two purposes. Firstly, to determine whether the themes linked with the data set and secondly to code additional data in the themes which may have been overlooked in previous stages. By the end of phase 4, the researcher had a fair idea of what the different themes were, the relationship between the themes and the overall story the data was telling.

Phase 5 involved the process of **defining and naming themes**. The core of each theme was identified, as well as the aspect of data that each theme represented. The researcher returned to the collated data extracts for each theme and organised them into a rational account with an accompanying narrative. The data extracts were not merely paraphrased; the researcher identified what was appealing about them and why so. The "story" of each theme was identified, as well as the "story" of how the data fits together on a broader level, in relation to the research questions. As part of the refinement process, the researcher identified whether there were any sub-themes. "Sub-themes are essentially themes-within-a-theme. They can be useful for giving structure to a particularly large and complex theme and also for demonstrating the hierarchy of meaning within the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 23). During phase five, the researcher also started thinking about names that could be given to themes in the final analysis, which may be different to their working titles used in previous phases.

Phase 6 involved **writing the report** and commenced when the researcher had a set of fully worked-out themes for the final analysis and report write-up. "The task of the write-up of a thematic analysis is to tell the complicated story of your data in a way which convinces the reader of the merit and validity of your analysis" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 24). The story that the data tells is an accurate, logical account of information within themes and across themes. Data extracts need to be chosen wisely for the write-up. The analytic narrative contained embedded data extracts which substantiate the story being told by the researcher. Careful consideration was taken to produce an argument in relation to the research questions and not merely a description of data extracts. The researcher attempted to analyse the data on a semantic level, not only a latent level. In other words, an interpretation of the data was presented, rather than a mere description. Interpretation involves attaching meaning to what was found, offering explanations for what was found and drawing conclusions about the data (Patton, 2002). "The challenge of qualitative inquiry involves portraying a holistic picture of what the phenomenon is like" (Patton, 2002, p. 480). At this point, the researcher aimed to present a description, interpretation and analytic narrative of the concept of early literacy from the viewpoint of a group of Sesotho speaking mothers from a low socio-economic area in the Free State province of South Africa.

In qualitative research credibility, consistency and applicability are essential measures of quality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 as cited in Golafshani, 2003), as well as transferability and confirmability (Morrow, 2005). A number of steps were taken to ensure the credibility or the internal consistency of the research process, including the results of the study. Credibility is enhanced by describing the relationship between the data and the emerging analysis, as well as providing explanations of how

sufficiency of the data was evaluated (Morrow, 2005). In the current study, credibility was achieved by reaching the point of data saturation after 12 interviews took place. Campbell (1996 as cited in Golafshani, 2003) maintains that consistency is achieved when steps of the research process are verified through evaluation of particular items, namely the raw data (transcriptions), data reduction products (phase 3 and 4 of the data analysis process) and process notes. An objective evaluation of the data was achieved by having the transcription and data reduction product of the pilot study reviewed by a researcher knowledgeable in the field of qualitative interviewing. To increase the reliability of the data, the second interpreter was responsible for cross-checking all the transcriptions by listening to the interviews after the initial transcription was completed and ensuring that the recorded interviews correlated with the transcripts. Interpreter B was qualified in the study of African languages and had an affiliation with a reputable university, and was thus well qualified to perform this task. The trustworthiness of the data was increased by utilizing a data collection instrument, the interview guide, which was designed by the researcher, informed by the literature, to gain very specific information regarding the perceptions of early literacy. Valuable input was received by two experienced researchers in the design of the interview guide; one with expertise in the area of qualitative research and the other with expertise in the field of early literacy. Although the data obtained from qualitative research cannot be transferable to other populations (Morrow, 2005), certain aspects thereof may be applicable to other low income populations.

Another measure to improve the quality of the data was the implementation of a pilot study. A pilot study is often utilized as a means of pre-testing the adequacy of a specific research instrument such as an interview guide (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). By applying a pilot study before commencing with data collection, the researcher was able to improve the credibility and applicability of the interview guide and the interviewing process.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the following chapter, the themes emerging from the thematic analysis of the data are presented, interpreted and explained. The text in italics represents quotations from participants. Bold italics text represents phrases in the quotations which are particularly pertinent to the theme being discussed. Non-italized text in brackets within the quotations is an explanation of terms or phrases used by the participant which place the participant's words into context.

In the following table a summary of the themes and subthemes is presented. The researcher identified three main themes. Within the first theme two subthemes were identified. Within the second theme three subthemes were identified and within the third theme five subthemes were identified.

Table 4.1 Summary of themes and subthemes

Theme	**Subthemes**
1. Mother as role model	1.1 Mothers' literacy habits
	1.2 Commitment to education
2. Home literacy practices	2.1 Barriers to literacy development
	2.2 Teaching reading and writing
	2.3 Resources
3. Participants' perceptions of factors relating to early literacy	3.1 Education as key to a better life
	3.2 Perceptions of differences between various groups of people
	3.3 Development of literacy
	3.4 Role of the mother in relation to early literacy development
	3.5 Role of the teacher in relation to early literacy development

4.1: Mother as role model

4.1.1 Mothers' literacy habits

Most participants reported having an interest in reading, with the main reading resources available to them being magazines and newspapers. Newspapers delivered free of charge in their area were the most popular choice of reading material and the purpose of reading was most often to search for employment. Although most participants reported to be engaged in some adult reading activities in the home environment, what is concerning is the possibly low percentage of time spent reading for enjoyment. Furthermore, their children's potential attitudes towards literacy and interest in reading and writing is a concern as children are likely to exhibit less interest in reading and writing activities when parents do not adequately model literacy activities in the home environment (Yeo, Ong & Ng, 2014). A child's perception of literacy can change for the better when the child observes a parent reading for enjoyment or other more specific reasons (Rothman, 2014). Although participants exposed their children to reading for a specific purpose (finding employment), the children may not have been exposed to adults who read for general knowledge and more general information purposes. Exposure to adults who read for enjoyment was not a common occurrence. These factors could have a negative influence on the already disadvantaged children's literacy attitudes.

An additional concern is the obvious lack of availability of adult literacy materials due to poverty, and how this translates to parents modelling literacy behaviours in their homes. Poverty and a lack of resources can be viewed as barriers to children's literacy development; and parents' involvement in their children's education is likely to be limited in situations of poverty (Motala & Luxomo, 2014). Parental involvement in education includes the modelling of literacy behaviours in the home environment. Unfortunately, lower levels of parental involvement are not always by choice, but rather circumstance.

Some participants expressed a clear dislike for writing, such as participant B who commented "*I read magazines, newspaper but I do not like to write to be honestly!"* In contrast, many participants used writing as a method for releasing and expressing emotions, in the form of essays, poems and journal writing. Participant C and E explained respectively:

"You know, I just like doing things, I don't remember what they are called in Sesotho? Essays, you know. It's about my life I want it to be like that. I write that I envy to work, meaning, how my life should be, understand? How I should to live with my children. My wish is to get a job, I write about such things. Something like a diary."

"Each and every day I record. Sometimes when I'm happy I'll record I was happy this day- something like that. If something bad happened I will report."

Many participants making use of diary entries explained that the journal writing was a way to express wishes, with many highlighting the desire to live a life free from poverty and the aspirations they held for their children. Writing about life goals has been associated with a significant increase in wellbeing (King, 2001). The use of journal writing was a possible coping mechanism for most of the participants living in a low income area and experiencing high stress levels. The situation should be viewed in a positive light with participants having found a source of emotional release, which may have resulted in mothers who were able to be more responsive to their children and children being exposed to appropriate adult literacy behaviours.

Although most participants were engaging in some form of literacy activities in their home, only participant K explicitly mentioned that she was a role model for her child in terms of literacy when she said *"I think, because they say charity begins at home so also* ***we in the home must be the role model of our children****."*

4.1.2 Commitment to education

Many participants expressed commitment to their own education and seemed to place great value on their own education, as well as that of children. Despite not all completing their Grade 12 or matric year, many participants had done further training, such as short courses in sign language and children's development.

"Uhm it was Grade 11 (highest grade passed) *because I failed my Grade 12 so the highest grade is Grade 11. Uh yes, I went for training about uh it was a kids programme. Like you learn about kids there and then you learn on how to like the, what do they call it- the stepping stones of how kids grow. So I had that type of training because I was also a caregiver. It was looking after kids who didn't have parents and that were disabled. It was a non-governmental organisation."* (Participant H)

"I studied civil engineering but then I dropped out. Now I'm currently busy with my diploma in general nursing."(Participant D)

Participant K's commitment to her studies is evident in the quotation below, where she explains that she made use of the library to study due to distractions and limited space at home. The quotation also indirectly points to the poverty and inadequate living conditions that many citizens in South Africa are exposed to. Although participant K's living conditions may fall into the "just

adequate"[12] category, as measured by the Living Conditions Survey 2008-2009 (Lehohla, 2011), these conditions were not conducive to studying. Despite this, participant K felt that an education was so crucial to her; she was willing to pursue it knowing that she would have to make use of the library for study purposes, while simultaneously raising a child.

"I…in 2011, I was at nursing school. So at home, our house is very small so I couldn't study at home. So I thought at the library is the best place to be to study because if I am at home, I just want to, I go check TV, look for something else. But when you are at the library, I can concentrate on my studies." (Participant K)

Participant J explained: "*I've done my training at Motheo* (college) *but it's just a short course then I've done. Mechanical engineering. Yes then after that I went to Golden Hour Academy for ambulances. I've done my BAA there and then after that, after not getting a job, license I went to SA Truck for the other project for welding."*

Similarly, participant B explained the difficulties she encountered with regards to finding employment when she commented, *"I'm still struggling for the job. Firstly I was looking for the bursary but unfortunately I didn't get anything. And then jobs- I was called by Defence force. I do the medical tests but they didn't call me."*

Despite having an impressive list of credentials, participant J remained unemployed, with her main source of income being a child support grant of R330 per month. The struggle both women (participants J and B) face with regards to employment unfortunately is the reality of countless young South Africans. Recent statistics reveal that in the last quarter of 2014, 1. 6 million South Africans, aged 15 to 64 years, were unemployed despite having completed secondary education, while 343 000 (14%) unemployed citizens have tertiary education (Lehohla, 2014).

Although no conclusion can be made that these unemployed individuals are searching for employment, it is likely that a large percentage is willing to contribute to the economy of the country but is unable to.

[12] The "just adequate" category between "less than adequate" and "more than adequate" as outlined by STATS SA to describe the perceived adequacy of standard of living.

4.2: Home literacy practices

4.2.1 Barriers to literacy development

Financial constraints were the largest barrier to families engaging in home literacy practices and thereby created a barrier for mothers to assist their child's early literacy development. Participant C explained:

"***Maybe the one who's poor cannot access to where the rich one is***. *Maybe I can be the living example, I envy to read Huisgenoot* (a local magazine) *and others, but I can't go and buy it because* ***I'm poor I don't have money to buy it.****"*

"I did not have (magazines and newspapers) *and sometimes they were scarce, but sometimes when you stay there in the mokhukhu*[13] *you only get Express and Issue and they are the things we get."*

Participant C seemed to associate the reading of magazines with financial resources and relied on free newspaper deliveries in the township for reading purposes. The enjoyment of magazines was possibly seen as an (unattainable) luxury as she prioritised necessities at home. Considering that Stats SA reported that in 2008 and 2009, 57, 8% of Free State households were living on the upper-bound poverty line[14] (Lehohla, 2011), it is possible that participant C would be placed in this category as she comments that she is poor and cannot afford to buy reading materials. She is forced to rely on the free delivery of local newspapers in her area. It is understandable that participant C viewed reading materials as non-essential items in her household, since she was trying to feed, clothe and educate her child with a child care grant of R330 per month, even less than the upper bound poverty line. It can be deduced from participant C's statement that there are not many reading materials available in her home and perhaps nothing that would be appropriate for a child.
Apart from finance, other barriers to literacy development in the community identified by some participants include ignorance regarding the importance of literacy among the youth[15]; a lack of parent guidance for school-aged children in terms of education and direction, planning and goal setting for the future; as well as low levels of education among the parents of the youth. However,

[13] Mokhukhu is the Sesotho word for shack (Levenson, 2013).

[14] Upper-bound poverty line (R577 per month per household) is calculated by adding the average non-food expenditure to the food poverty line of houses (R305 per month) where the food expenditure is close to the food poverty line.

[15] The United Nations defines the youth as the group of citizens between the ages of fifteen and 24 years (UNDESA).

Participant H felt strongly that ignorance regarding the importance of education among the 'young people' in her community was not the result of a lack of parental guidance:

"Yes, but then in most cases it's not about getting guidance, it's all about being ignorant. You know they (young people) *are very ignorant…guidance it's there like 24/7."*

Participant K explained that a lack of parental education could result in a lack of guidance and education in the next generation when she said, *"Sometimes I think it's the parents. And also when I say, like last time I said,* ***if you are not educated, sometimes you don't see the importance of your children to get educated also****."*

In the poverty trends report, Stats SA indicate that in 2011 almost 31% of South African adults with a matric certificate were living in poverty (Lehohla, 2014). With almost a third of South Africa's matriculated population living in poverty in 2011, one questions whether a matric certificate in itself is sufficient to provide a stable income for a household, or even an individual.

Although data pertaining to the education of the older generation (above 50 years of age) of South Africa's citizens is difficult to find, one can expect that since the apartheid regime was only eradicated in 1994, a large percentage of the Sesotho population over the age of fifty is poorly educated as these adults would have been educated under the Bantu Education system of apartheid, in which Black people were denied education in Mathematics and Science in order to generate cheap labour for the country (Asmal & James, 2001 in Books & Ndlalane, 2011). This could explain participant K's observation that perhaps some parents in the older generation did not recognise the importance of literacy and education since they were insufficiently educated and they were possibly unable to provide the necessary guidance and motivation that their children needed to complete their schooling. Sadly, the current education system in South Africa also fails to provide a quality education to many of the country's citizens and the history of illiteracy among South African adults is continuing.

4.2.2 Teaching reading and writing

Most participants reported engaging in some form of home literacy practices with their children, even though their literacy resources were scarce. Many reported engaging their children in writing activities (particularly writing of the child's name) rather than reading, or precursors to reading such as alphabet knowledge and phonological awareness activities. Some participants reported engaging in writing activities which focussed on numeracy, rather than alphabet or letter knowledge. Participant J and C reported respectively:

"I only show him how to write his name, teach him his name, his surname."

"Yes, yes, you take a pen and show him 1, 2, you will then write 1, and then you give him a pen saying, write 1."

Low levels of involvement in children's literacy development have been found to be significant amongst parents in both single parent and two-parent homes in Nigeria, with no indication that parents participated in library outings with children or attended information workshops on parent-child interactions (Enemuo & Obidike, 2013). Unfortunately, the researchers do not give any indication of the socio-economic status of the parents in their study and their literacy behaviour cannot be directly compared to the participants in the current study. It is worth noting that the parents in Enemuo and Obidike's study were members of the Parents Teachers Association in the sampled schools. It seems that parents were possibly more interested in the management of the school and viewed this as a way of being involved in their children's education, rather than participate in parent-child interactions.

Only two participants (E and I) in the study reported using the library as a tool for their children's literacy development. Almost all participants were single parents, which could have negatively affected their level of involvement in home literacy activities.

Participant D reported regret about not having started alphabet teaching with her 5 year-old child sooner and explained that although her child was in a crèche, she still had a duty as a parent to engage in literacy practices at home:

"What I've observed, because I've been teaching my daughter, because now, the crèche she is attending is not really formal so I have to catch her up with some things. Uhm, reading, because now we haven't done the alphabet so we not really up to scratch so it's something that I feel had I started earlier-maybe started with the alphabets or what. It's just that I didn't have a structured way of teaching her. ***But children learn a lot about it from hear-say and imitations. So I'll write something and she will copy that.*** *And I'm very happy to know that now she knows her name. She can even recognise her name."*

Participant's D quotation indicates the inadequacy she feels with facilitating her daughter's literacy development. She is willing to allocate time and effort to this crucial foundation but is unsure as to how to go about it, which emphasises the need for the South African government and education system to prioritise the foundation of early literacy and assist parents in doing so by providing them with practical workshops and also better equip crèches and day care centres with early literacy resources and opportunities for educator training.

Participant D also explained how she engaged with her daughter in shared storybook reading activities:

"The reading. I mostly do the reading. I recently bought two story books. ***Yeah, but now it's in English and my daughter is Sotho speaking so I have to get her to imitate what I'm saying.*** *But now I just have the two books so I repeat the stories.* ***Sometimes I just ask from the pictures, "What do you see?" "What do you think they are doing?"*** *and then she will be on par with what is being said. So ja, that's how we read*."

Participant D's seemingly dialogic book-sharing style[16] is a positive attribute to early literacy development as low income mothers' questions to children, rather than statements have been shown to be related to children's contributions to book-sharing activities at the age of four years (Luo, Tamis-LeMonda, Kuchirko, Ng & Liang, 2014). Participant E explained how she and her daughter engaged in story telling with a visual aid:

"I have these books- the Disney books but it's few. It's not too much. Yes she will just look at the pictures and tell you if she saw someone running, "Mommy she's running. She's running to buy something." Just like that. She will explain to you the story but even if it's not the truth of the story."

Oral narrative skills[17] have been found to facilitate the connection between early language and preschool emergent literacy (Gardner-Neblett & Iruka, 2015) and possibly, unknowingly, participant E and was engaging her child in an oral narrative activity.

Participant's D and E's reflections about the storybooks they used in the home environment raise crucial questions about access to literacy materials in low income populations, as well as access within South Africa's various cultural groups. The choice of having bought Disney books raises the question of whether the participants viewed the Western literacy model as a gold standard or rather that access to Sotho literacy materials was extremely limited; or even that the participants viewed English as a literate language and the language of schooling and learning, while Sesotho was viewed as an oral language and a form of cultural identity. It should also be kept in mind that Disney stories are often very popular among young children in countries such as South Africa.

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[16] Dialogic book reading refers to a form of shared book reading during which adult and child roles shift during the book reading interaction (Simsek & Erdogan, 2015).

[17] Oral narrative skills refer to storytelling and story retelling (Vandewalle, Boets, Boons, Ghesquière & Zinc, 2012).

Only participant H, who had completed an early education training programme, explained in detail how she used an explicit teaching method with her child. An explicit model of early literacy intervention, generated from a bottom-up learning model, features "adult modelling, demonstration, targeted elicitation and repeated guided practice" (Justice & Kaderavek, 2004, p. 204). It can be stated that participant H was engaging her child in activities of analysis and synthesis of words (phonological awareness), even if she did not understand the theoretical implications of the activities. An important aspect of an explicit model of early literacy development is the focus on a metalinguistic level, which facilitates children's learning of the associations between smaller and larger parts of the alphabetic code (Justice & Kaderavek, 2004).

"Yes he can spell a few words because what we do it's like, let me make an example. ***If you say like apple, we try for him to pronounce it, to say it like a and what what and p and stuff so ja we try to teach him that and he does know a few words, how to pronounce them and spell them.****"*

Participant G used what can be described as an embedded-explicit method[18] of early literacy teaching at home, which combines a top-down and bottom-up approach to learning literacy (Justice & Kaderavek, 2004).

"I let them (children) *sit down and then say,* ***let us play school, I'm the teacher****. I then give them pens and papers. When I'm finished then I tell them to write, and later I mark their work."*

Participant L regarded drawing and colouring in as literacy activities and assumed that her child of 4 years old was too young to understand a story or engage in storytelling:

"But even before he goes to the crèche, he used to ask me, "Mamma, give me the book and the paper" because he likes to watch TV also. Yes, so that's why he sees the other kids playing on TV and taking books to draw and to colour the books."

"This coloured books, the scenery pictures and this one that you are using with crayons. ***A story, no because he is still young.****"*

From the quotation above it can be deduced that participant L's child was rarely, if ever, engaged in any sort of book-sharing activity at home and exposure to print was probably minimal as her child

[18] An embedded-explicit model for literacy learning refers to a naturalistic approach which makes use of learning opportunities in the environment while simultaneously targeting the teaching of specific literacy skills (Justice & Kaderavek, 2004).

preferred colour-in books and books with pictures. Although exposure to literacy-rich television assists with vocabulary development, better phonological awareness and increased motivation to learn (e.g. Anderson et al., 2001; Clark and Rumbold, 2006; Foy and Mann, 2003; Hastings et al., 2009; Van Evra, 2004 as cited in Liebeskind, Piotrowski, Lapierre & Linebarger, 2014), one must be weary of assuming, in scenarios such as explained by Participant L above, that exposure to television is literacy focussed.

Only participant B reported engaging in bedtime stories with her child:

"Children will read the bedtime stories. Uhm twice a week, maybe three times."

The practice of reading bedtime stories is shaped by culture, family dynamics and child characteristics (Saracho & Spodek, 2013) and therefore each culture represents a unique practice of the timeless activity. The use of interactive bedtime routines such as storytelling has been positively associated with maternal age, maternal education, family income and the number of bedrooms in a housing unit. Mothers with lower levels of income and education have been found to be less likely to engage their three year old children in interactive bedtime routines (Hale, Berger, LeBourgeois & Brooks-Gunn, 2009), implying that the practice of bedtime stories may be largely linked to socio-economic status.

Most participants were engaging their children in some form of early literacy activities in the home, whether they focussed on reading or writing. Most participants used repetition and imitation as strategies during home literacy activities. Participants seemed to rely on a skills-based approach, rather than a naturalistic approach to literacy development. These results indicate that, despite the participants' good intentions, in most cases, the home literacy environment was not optimal for early literacy development, and this may also have a negative effect on reading, mathematics and social emotional behaviour in preschool (Baker, 2013).

4.2.3 Resources

Many participants reported having few resources for early literacy activities in their households, mainly due to financial constraints. Most participants relied on pen and paper and one or two storybooks. The results are consistent with the prePIRLS 2011 report in which 27% of South

African Grade 4 and 5 pupils fall into the "few resources" category[19] for home learning resources, while internationally only 9% of pupils had few learning resources in their homes. Two participants were using a chalkboard in their homes during literacy activities with their children and the children seemed to enjoy the activities. Participants D and F made the following comments regarding the early literacy resources they were using:

*"**I bought a chalkboard, a mini chalkboard and some chalk**. And then, like crayons because she colours a lot. So I've got a book and a pencil but she enjoys the chalkboard too much! She feels like a mini teacher!"* (Participant D)

"We use a chalkboard. I write on the chalkboard. And then if they are wrong, I correct them." (Participant F)

Participant J commented that she only had one storybook available at home for her child:

"Uhm for him I don't have any (books). *There's only just one, ja I think it's one. Yes the storybook."*

Large gaps exist between the low, and middle and high socio-economic groups in terms of access to print in the early years (Neuman & Celano, 2012), highlighting, once again, the impact of socio-economic status on children's education. Factors such as low income, poor housing structure and uncertainty of resources can negatively impact the time and material resources that parents provide for learning purposes (Coleman, 1988; Conger & Conger, 2002 in Ball et al, 2014). Living in poverty means that parents tend to focus on meeting basic needs such as food, housing and health (Ball et al, 2014) and other factors such as children's educational needs are possibly neglected as they may seem unimportant in comparison to basic human needs and may require resources beyond what parents are able to provide.

Participant H explained how she creatively used the books from her child's younger years to focus on vocabulary development, alphabet knowledge and phonological awareness.

*"But then the books that we that we used with him when he was little we still use it so he can learn the animals as well **and know the alphabets like A it's for apple** and where is the apple in the book. So that's what we do."* (Participant H)

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[19] A scale was created with the categories many resources, some resources and few resources. The scale was based upon measures of books in the home, children's books in the home, parental education level, parents' occupation, children's own bedroom and Internet access.

Although many participants frequented the library, it was for their personal gain (information for studies and a quiet place to study). Only participant I made use of the library on a regular basis for the purpose of early literacy instruction of her son:

*"**When I'm going to the library I'm going to check the book for my son**, sometimes they like, my child they like to read. I like to go on Saturday. Maybe after 2 weeks, yes."*

Research has indicated that children living in affluent areas hear (through adult's reading to children) fourteen times more words in print than children living in low socio-economic areas (Neuman & Celano, 2012). This highlights the need for government to step in and address this gap between the affluent and the poor by investing in the early years of children from low socio-economic backgrounds.

4.3: Participants' perceptions of factors relating to early literacy

4.3.1 Education as key to a better life

All the participants expressed their views regarding the importance of education and felt that education was the gateway to a better future and a means to escape poverty. Many participants expressed guilt or regret as a result of not completing school and were desperate for their children to remain focussed on studying and not engage in wrongdoing which could influence their education. Many participants expressed the phrase "education is a key", implying that without education many doors in their children's lives would remain closed. Participants held the perception that education could change their child's life course and education was the deciding factor for whether a child succeeded in life or not. Most of the participants viewed success as financial independence and many commented on the luxuries that they desired for their children, such as big homes and cars. Financial independence was thus an important aspect of the parents' perceptions of the benefits of education.

Most participants were hopeful about their child's future and had great aspirations for their children. A distinction can be made between parental expectations and parental aspirations. While expectations are realistic academic beliefs based on a child's academic proficiency and available resources (Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010), aspirations are wishes and goals that parents have formed regarding their child's future and they are not necessarily realistic or attainable (Seginer, 1983 in Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010). The participants' comments probably reflect their aspirations for their children rather than expectations, if one considers the poor academic achievement of South African pupils from low socio-economic areas in the public schooling system

(Maswikiti, 2008). Most participants were open-minded about their aspirations, as seen in the following quotations by participants H, E and G:

"*I want him to be successful, obviously. I want him to love books because I grew up in a house whereby books was like the meal of the day, you know! I want him to love books and I want him to appreciate the education he will be getting as he grows older*." (H)

"*I can't choose that* (daughter's future) *but I want him to be* ***educated and be independent***." (E)

"I wish my child to get the best job, and to get a job, ***he must study so that he gets educated and gets what he wants.****"* (G)

Participants B, A and I held especially high aspirations for their children:

*"****Education can open doors, I mean big doors****! Maybe they can get scholarship to London or China to study whatever he would like to study."* (B)

"He may be able to go to the University and get a best job so that she can come back to care for me, ja". (A)

"I have three boys, that is, I want them to get educated, the other one be a teacher, the other one a nurse, the other one a policeman and ***must live a lavish life***." (I)

Although only two of the participants mentioned "university" specifically (A & B), other participants spoke broadly about education, which could have included any post matric qualifications including diplomas, certificates etc. or they were perhaps referring to a matric certificate when they used the term "education". Participant D mentioned that her matric certificate was a key to an improved life:

"I was telling my friend why waste those nice distinctions when you could be doing something else? That's like your key. ***Matric is like your key****."* (D)

Participant H did not comment on her dreams for her child but rather explained that as he grew older he would develop his own dreams and goals and that an education can help him realise these goals:

"Uhm education, what it can do for him, it can, as he grows he has, ***he will also develop dreams and goals so it will open doors for him****. It will make life for him as he wants it to be. If he wants to study, he will have that opportunity. Education it's very important like it's a lock to all doors.* ***Like it's the key to all doors that are locked in life*** *so that's what I think about his education. Yes."* (H)

An interesting observation was made when participants were asked how their child would achieve the dreams they had for them. Most participants commented on parental support and encouragement. No comments were made regarding the child's abilities, quality of schooling or financial resources:

*"**What is necessary, encouragement. Encouragement, patience, have patience with a child**. You know don't give up easily because you see the child is struggling. Just have patience and encouragement, that's what will help. He will achieve his dreams as long as he does have support and encouragement as well."* (H)

"I must support them, I must push them from behind to learn and complete school." (C)

4.3.2 Perceptions of differences between various groups of people with regard to literacy

The following section discusses the participants' perceptions regarding differences between specific groups of people, namely Black and White people; rich and poor people and young and old people, with regard to literacy.

Research by Stone, Silliman, Ehren & Apel (2004) has shown that "successful parent-child interventions focussed on promoting literacy often incorporate participants' cultural perspectives" (p. 155). In South Africa, different cultural groups are often also demarcated along racial lines. To gain information about the participants' perspectives regarding reading and writing in different cultural groups, they were asked to reflect on their perspective of the differences between Black and White people in terms of literacy. The researcher is of the opinion that dialogue between the various racial groups in South Africa is an imperative step towards a true democracy and overcoming the barriers created by the past.

Many participants commented on their perceptions of different views of literacy among Black and White people. However, the perceptions among the group of participants were not uniform and many of the views expressed were conflicting. Some participants also felt uneasy answering questions about race (although South Africa has been a democratic country for twenty two years) and needed encouragement to speak openly to the researcher about their opinions. A possible cause for this resistance is that the researcher asking the questions is White, while the interpreter and participant are Black and belong to the same cultural group. Furthermore, a power difference may also have existed between the educated middle-class researcher and the less educated participants. Participant D remarked, in the quotation below, on the positive changes that have occurred in South

Africa post-apartheid, in particular more opportunities for equal education for all race groups. She commented that in the past (referring to the apartheid years), people of colour lived in "survival mode", trying to make enough money for necessities and due to their racial classification they were not easily able to attend schools and educate themselves.

"Uhm, like, ***in the olden days, being, literacy wasn't so much important to Black people, we just wanted to survive.*** *Get a job and do whatever. And then, I don't know if maybe White people, I can say White people were raised in a more privileged life with choices of going to school. Black people didn't really have a choice to go to school. It was a privilege for you to go to school. But nowadays, I think like our generation, we are more on par and on the same level with regards to education."*

Participant D touches briefly on the life of privilege lived by White people in South Africa, during the apartheid years, and the constant struggles faced by Black South Africans as a result of discrimination that included receiving mediocre education with poor resource provision (Motala & Pampallis, as cited in Msila, 2013). Her last thoughts in the quotation above are of particular interest as there are still many inequalities in existence within the South African education system. Kelly (2007) points out that many children from low socio-economic backgrounds are still trapped in township schools (historically Black schools) with limited resources and teachers who are not adequately prepared for their task.

Furthermore, participant D commented on the difference in perception of education in the past and present, adding that in all race groups in South Africa education has become important. Participant D's comments are based on the political history in South Africa and she is referring to the period when the country was under the ruling of the National Party and not all race groups received equal educational opportunities. She is contrasting the previous political situation in South Africa with the current situation, in which opportunities to education are no longer linked to race.

"In the olden days, education wasn't taken much seriously because ***now we've realised the basis of any successful person is education so now there's more emphasis on it****- all types of people, all races. So we, like parents are emphasising more on education. Because I think in the olden days, we were more focussed on surviving- get a job, get a stable life. But now we're more driven, success orientated. So in order to reach goals, we've got to get the foundation, education."*

Some participants were of the opinion that White people were more focussed and goal-orientated than Black people. Participant H commented:

"Uhm the way I've seen it, uhm White people are like, they are like they know what they want you know. ***They stick to their books, they stick to their priorities, they stick to their goals. They know what they want.*** *With us Black people, it's one of those things that uh "Why should I do it you know, Why should I write, Why should I go to school." So there's a, we do have differences. Not every Black person does that, but like most."*

Participant H was also of the opinion that while White people read for the purpose of knowledge, she did not observe this behaviour among Black people.

"Eh, I can say, when White people read something, they do so to know, and not to forget. We as Black people, most of us read something to forget and not to know and we don't use the information from things that we're reading."

Another participant (L) felt that Black people were lazy and possibly less motivated to read. Similarly, participant H felt that some Black people were of the opinion that literacy was not important, but at the same time she said that others within the group of South African Black people felt that literacy was an escape route from poverty. Participant H's views that literacy was not important among Black people could be linked to the fact that poor Black people do not seek jobs that require much literacy. Her comments refer to Black people of a low socio-economic status, rather than the entire group Black people.

"Yes I think so because I think Black people we are lazy to read and write. Like when coming to go to school. Like here the other people say 'No I can't go to school, I'm lazy.' When I was at school some of the people said 'No I can't stay here and read. I am going to look for a job.' So they are lazy to read." (L)

"Yes Black people; about literacy they think that it's not our thing. ***It's a White's person thing.*** *'Uhm I am poor why should I be reading and writing, you know.' But then there's the no, which I'm saying that uhm there are people that are very poor which say that* ***'Okay I'm poor, I want to get out of this situation. So in order to do that, I do have a dream, I do have a goal. In order to reach that I need to read a lot and write.'*** *And that's how I'm saying yes and no." (H)*

Participant E held a similar opinion, with the underlying factor being a lack of motivation and literacy viewed as punishment and therefore having a negative connotation, while participant H spoke openly about her views of demotivation among Black people:

"Most of Black people they just take things simple. If I say, 'Go and study,' she will say, 'But I'm doing this or I'm watching TV, I'm watching this.' But if you say to the White kids, 'go and read' it's not the punishment. She will say 'I will go and read and she will do exactly what you say."(E)

"You know, I, honestly I think there is because ***we, us Black people we like to demotivate ourself. We really love to demotivate ourself.****" (H)*

It is important to highlight the psychology of poverty, reflected in participant H's comments about demotivation, relating to a lack of resources rather than originating out of affiliation with a specific cultural, linguistic or racial group.

Only two participants felt that there was no difference between Black and White people's views of literacy.

"Mm let me say, ah, most of the people want to go on with their lives, ***so without reading and writing you will go nowhere****, so I think they (Black and White people) think alike and therefore they're in search of progress alike."* (A)

The participants' comments in this subtheme reflect the value they place on literacy and reading as an activity and a skill that can possibly contribute to a successful future. Black people who are living in poverty may possibly view literacy as a "rich man's past-time" or something removed from their frame of reference as it seems to serve little purpose in their lives.

Many participants commented on their perception of the difference between rich and poor people when it comes to literacy. Participant A seemed to feel that people from low income families were almost demotivated to become literate as they believed tertiary education would not become a reality for them:

"Mm, those people, I think so because ***I don't think that poor people do care so much to know how to read and write because they think even if they try so hard, it seems they will not access tertiary education*** *and be able to go to higher institutions, so I think rich people are lucky to know these things as they have money and everything and therefore their life will progress."* (A)

Participant B highlighted the effects of poverty on the home learning environment when she commented on the lack of resources available in low income homes, which had a negative influence reading frequency: "*…they don't think alike because* ***rich people have money to buy books****, while we do not have*." Her comment indicates that her social and physical environment does not support early literacy development (Neuman, 2001).

Participant D held the perception that wealthy people seemed to value education less than poor people. She felt that children born into wealthy homes need not use education as the route to success, since a reasonably comfortable lifestyle has already been guaranteed. She commented as follows:

"*Now rich people may have a tendency of slacking and think I have it all. Why do I still need to get ahead?* ***I'm already successful. I was born into money or whatever****."*

Participant K seemed to share similar perceptions regarding differences between rich and poor people. She commented: "*…but there is others who will just waste their parents' money. Just go to school, doesn't care whether they succeed or what*." She implies that some children from well-off families may waste their educational opportunities because they are not motivated by or dependent on (personal) success.

In addition, participants also commented on their perceptions of the differences between young and old people's views of literacy. Research relating to perceptions regarding literacy in the young and older generations is extremely limited. Participant C mentioned a practical aspect regarding differences between generations, stating "*He envies to read, he's no longer can read, his eyes can't see, he's old*." Sadly, in a low income population, assistive devices such as corrective spectacles and contact lenses; surgery for cataracts and audio tapes for persons with blindness may be difficult to come by.

Participants H and J shared similar opinions regarding early literacy perceptions in the young and older generations. Both participants seemed to feel that young people do not value literacy in the way that the older generation does:

"And then, older people, if you could see like at this current moment, older people will be the ones to encourage young people to read and write. But then the young ones they will be like "No it's not important, I'll do it tomorrow." Tomorrow will be like tomorrow and it will be forever ***so I think older people are more interested in reading than younger people are.***" (H)

"*But to us the young, it's something that comes and goes. We don't consider it* (literacy). *Just think of it and then leave it like that*." (J)

Participants also commented on their perceptions of early literacy from a cultural perspective. Most participants were of the opinion that the Sesotho culture valued literacy and that being literate was a positive attribute. Participant D also felt that literacy was perhaps a status symbol in the Sotho culture, or to a degree could guarantee a certain level of status within the Sotho community.

"*I can't be specific to Sesotho people. But since I'm living mostly among them,* ***we're very much motivated to learn and get literate****…So we just, everyone wants to fit in- even just to be in the same status- maybe educational or social or whatever*."

Participant L reiterated participant D's comments regarding present cultural beliefs when she said: "*We have that passion. Yes, we have that passion of reading and writing*."

Participant D also commented on past literacy beliefs within the Sotho culture, explaining that education was granted to men and not necessarily to women. Her comments highlight how gender inequality characterised the Sotho culture, like many other Western and non-Western cultures, in the past and gave preference to male education.

"*So if a young girl, it was not necessary for the young girl to go to school. They wouldn't be pushed to go to school.* ***You know it was always for the empowerment of men*** *so they can carry their families and be heads of the families.*"

Similarly, participant K shared her experience of past cultural beliefs relating to literacy and education: "*At my mother's culture they were told that* ***ladies are not supposed to go to school****. Leave it for the boys to go to school. The ladies are not supposed to go to school*."

In conclusion, it seems that one main theme is present throughout section 4.3.2, namely that participants associated literacy and the motivation to gain literacy and education with socio-economic success or status. The participants attached significant value to literacy and education, using statements such as "*the basis of any successful person is education"* and "*I do have a dream, I do have a goal. In order to reach that I need to read a lot and write*." There seemed to be general consensus among the participants that literacy and formal education was the key to escaping the cycle of poverty and thereby creating a better life. Unfortunately, in South Africa this is not always the case as many literate and educated South Africans are unemployed. For example, Statistics South Africa found that in the last quarter of 2014, the unemployment rate for men with a matric certificate ranged from 7% (White men) to 26. 5% (Black African men) and the unemployment rate for women ranged from 10. 8% (White women) to 33.2% (Black African women). These statistics prove that a matric certificate does not guarantee employment in South Africa. Furthermore, in the same time period, Statistics South Africa found that 14% of South Africa's unemployed citizens (aged 15 to 64 years) have a tertiary education (Statistics South Africa, 2014). Although the situation is vastly better, a tertiary education cannot guarantee financial security or successful socio-economic status. The participants' motivation for their children to gain an adequate education is certainly a positive attribute and may contribute in the long run to their children's academic success.

However, migration from poverty is multifactorial and factors such as diversity of income, improved services for the formal[20] and informal sector[21], as well as education matched with employment opportunities all seem to play a role in poverty alleviation (Tilly, 2007 & Krishna, 2007 in Engle & Black, 2008). Most likely, literacy and education as a single factor may not be a guarantee of socio-economic wellbeing.

4.3.3 Development of literacy

Most participants were of the opinion that early literacy instruction should begin around four or five years of age. None of the participants expressed views that exposure to literacy could begin from birth (Rowe 2008 as cited in Lee 2013), while participant B felt that literacy development began at two years of age.

"Maybe 2 years, immediately when he started the crèche, you must start! (teaching literacy)" (B)

"I think the child learns to read and write, maybe when he/she is 4 or 5 years old." (C)

Although participant B's views of initiation of literacy development and instruction were linked to the start of crèche rather than a specific age, she perhaps indirectly understood that children as young as two and three years old shape writing and play events according to their personal interests (Wells Rowe & Neitzel, 2010) and that children as young as two should be exposed to and participate in as many literacy events as possible.

Many participants believed children acquire literacy through a process of imitation and most participants engaged their children in writing rather than reading activities. With the exception of alphabet knowledge (although only participants C, K and F explicitly referred to alphabet knowledge) none of the participants engaged their children in activities focussing on phonological awareness, print concepts or literate language, although difficulty in these areas of emergent literacy seems to contribute to later challenges in reading success (Catts, Fey, Tomblin & Zhang, 2002).

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[20] The formal sector is defined by Statistics South Africa (2001 & 2007) as economic activity which occurs within the boundaries of state regulations (Kay, 2011).

[21] The Expert Group on Informal Sector Statistics (2004) provides the following characteristics for the *informal* sector: 1.) organisations are owned by individuals or households which are not separate legal bodies independent of their owners, 2.) all or some of the goods or services produced are done so for sale purposes, 3.) they are not registered under certain forms of legislation such as tax laws and 4.) employment activities are non-agricultural.

"You see; I was teaching the younger one or wrote his name or mine on top and then said, copy that." (C)

"Like sometimes you can see, if me, I am always going to on Sundays I am going to church with her and then I see if I write, she also wants to do the same. So she will ask me, "Mom what must I write here? Will you write for me something else?" ***I will write her name and the other things and then I'll give her the pencil and the paper to write. Then she will do the same***." (K)

Some participants seemed to find colouring and drawing synonymous or at least closely related to literacy instruction and development and felt that their four-year-old children were too young to be engaged in storybooks.

"This coloured books, the scenery pictures and this one that you are using with crayons. ***A story, no because he is still young****."* (L)

"Eh, he was at the crèche so what I was teaching him was at the crèche was colouring and pasting things thus, ***I was not teaching him how to write as such, I was teaching him to colour****, that was the only thing I was teaching him."* (A)

Evans, Fox, Cremaso & McKinnon (2004) argue that parents' beliefs are moulded by memories of the way in which they were supported during childhood by parents, teachers and friends. This argument could possibly explain why some participants engaged their children in colouring-in activities and not early literacy tasks. It is possible that these participants did not receive early literacy exposure and support as children, because due to the apartheid system, their parents were perhaps not very educated and not able to provide such exposure. Although beyond the scope of inquiry in this study, it may be useful in future research to consider Sesotho first language speaking mothers', with a low socio-economic status, relationships with reading since research has found links between parent reading relationships[22] and children's reading development (Purcell-Gates, 1995; Rogers, 2003 as cited in Sokolinski, 2014).

Only participant H mentioned the use of play to assist with her child's development and explained her use of an embedded method of teaching, which facilitates a child's self-expression and exploration by using literacy as a tool (Justice & Kaderavek, 2004).

[22] Parent reading relationships refer to a parent's personal association with reading and this association may be positive or negative.

"Uhm, you know with me I believe that uhm a child's development is through growing. It's through playing. ***So like sometimes when the child is playing, you should be near the child so you can teach the child to know that okay this is one. It's like a single thing so it's one.*** *So I think that's how a child learns to write and to read. Yes."* (H)

The participants were clear about the value they placed on early literacy development, but have possibly not received adequate guidance with regards to how to facilitate early literacy development, since most participants equated early literacy development with alphabet knowledge and the copying or writing of letters. The participants seemed to rely on an explicit model of literacy instruction, in which the instruction of specific early literacy skills is emphasised. However, research indicates that combining an embedded or naturalistic approach with targeting of discrete skills is likely to produce the best results (Justice & Kaderavek, 2004).

4.3.4 Role of the mother in early literacy development

Most participants held the perception that mothers play a vital role in early literacy instruction and were not of the opinion that early literacy instruction was solely the role of the teacher. Participant H believes that a child's education begins with the parent and later the teacher steps in: *"I think most importantly the parent.* ***The parent should play a big role before teachers and stuff. It's the parent and then the teachers****."* Similarly, participant C felt the parent was responsible for literacy education: "***Yes, you Mom you are the one who should teach him how to read and write****. You show him that this is A.*"

Many participants also commented on the role of the parent; however it is unclear whether the participants were referring to themselves as single parents or to co-parenting roles. Participants B and G stressed that as parents it is vital to check children's school work on a daily basis and facilitate learning in areas where the child is struggling. It is interesting that participants A, B and G mentioned being involved in their children's school work but as parents they were not very active in the early literacy phase, which forms the foundation of success in school work. This discrepancy exists perhaps because parents value formal schooling more than the early education phase which prepares a child for the formal phase. Many participants also expressed their desire to be involved in their child's education and to play a supporting role to the teacher.

"Okay, ah, I think that as you're a parent who involved himself or herself in the child's schoolwork, the child will learn more from you as well as when he's focused at school." (A)

"Every day when the child comes to school, you must take your child and say, and ask her what did you do at school today, and a child may say, I have a homework, today we did this and this and then you then see and ***check his books every day to find out how he prosper at school and you must, check, check, check and you must praise your child****..."* (B)

"They (parents) must keep on checking the children's books when they come back from school whether they have done their homework and where the child fails they must help him." (G)

Some participants explained that the role of the mother was to lay a foundation upon which the teacher could build. Since many parents lacked formal training (in terms of teaching children) and made a point of mentioning it, it seemed that they felt somewhat inferior to teachers and perhaps this undermined their role as a facilitator in early literacy development. Research by Hanhan (2008) supports this finding since parenting is often viewed by society as something that everyone can do, while teaching is a well-respected profession that requires special knowledge and skills.

*"**I think there is a huge difference because they*** **(teachers)** ***know how to teach a child more than a parent does**. We, we are doing just the basics that we think are right as parents, but then they got training. They, they are like professionals. They know on how to teach a child."* (H)

Participant H seemed to feel inadequate towards teachers but was of the opinion that parents play a role in a child's education before teachers do and also previously commented "*It's the parents and then the teachers*." It seems that participant H acknowledges the parent's primary responsibility with regards to her child's education but she perceives the teacher as more qualified and better able to perform the teaching function.

Most of the participants displayed ownership of their responsibility in their child's education. Participants C, I and J felt that mothers and teachers were partners in their child's education and should be engaging in team work to assist a child in the best possible way. This partnership-model of the parent-teacher relationship is advocated in the research literature which has described schools and families as partners in their children's education (Lemmer 2013).

*"**The role of the teacher is to enlighten the child and then I complete the product**."* (I)

"If you want your child to be educated ***you have to help the teacher**. Also be more responsible, considerate, think about what you want for your child."* (J)

"I take the teacher halfway so that he cannot struggle a lot." (C)

4.3.5 Role of the teacher in early literacy development

The most notable perception held by participants was that of teachers[23] being professionals in education, who laid a foundation for further learning. Participant D's belief that a teacher is a facilitator in the learning process is in line with a constructivist theory of learning, an approach which encourages development of meaningful knowledge and understanding (Richardson, 2003 as cited in Vighnarajah, Wong & Kamariah, 2008), which is facilitated during discourse by both teachers and students (Maclellan & Soden, 2004 as cited in Yilmaz, 2008).

"Well, ***the teacher facilitates most of the learning*** *because now* ***I'm not familiar with the curriculum and what and how much should my five year-old learn so the teacher plays a very big role in that*** *because now they have a more structured, and they can give enough dosage of things to learn per day, other than me."* (D)

Many participants felt that teachers received formal training and were more qualified to teach early literacy than mothers themselves. Participants' beliefs of inferiority and inadequacy are perhaps shaped by teacher's beliefs that parents are unqualified to take on the role of reading instruction (Al-Momani, Ihmeideh & Naba'h, 2010). When taking into consideration the participants' perspectives on early literacy instruction, it would appear that the mothers' knowledge is limited and their perception of teachers as experts is perhaps appropriate.

"*Okay, the teacher's role,* ***because we as parents we don't really have that information on how to really really teach.*** *We're just doing what we think we know but like the teacher's role is to implement like the steps of how to read and how to write, yes*." (H)

"*I think there's a difference between parents and teachers.* ***The teachers know better than us***." (F)

Participant B commented on how she perceived the teacher as being a link between home and school and relied on the teacher to inform her of any academic problems which should be dealt with at home. Her comment below indicates that she felt she and her child's school were in a partnership and this partnership was for the purpose of her child's education (Lemmer, 2013).

"Ja if there's a problem with the child, if he doesn't know how to write or how to read, the parents are going to be responsible to teach him, and then that he or she must get from the school where the teacher will say 'What is the problem?' so they can solve that problem at home." (B)

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[23] Throughout section 4.3.5 participants have used the term *teacher* to refer to both early childhood development centre (crèche) practitioners or to teachers of school-aged children.

"*The role of the teacher at school is to care for the children; to teach our children and they must not be too harsh when the child does not understand what they want*." (A)

Participant J felt that the preschool teacher's role was to prepare a child for the academic journey ahead of him. Participant L also commented on the role of preparation a preschool teacher plays when she said "*The role of the teacher is to teach our children…so that our children can be educated... And to go forward with their education*." Participant J highlighted the multifaceted role that a preschool teacher should play: facilitation of play, literacy and numeracy development, amongst others. Participant J entrusted the formal education of her child to the school, which Lemmer (2013) describes as the "social structure specialised for this task" (p. 28).

"*They* (teachers) *should not only focus on taking them outside to play. They should also teach them how to read, how to write, how to count the numbers, everything.* ***So that's what teachers should do, prepare them for the rest of school, Grade 1 to Grade 12****; teach them how to write, prepare them*." (J)

Participants E and L provided perceptions of the teacher as a disciplinarian, teaching right from wrong and instilling moral behaviour in children.

"*The role of the teacher is to teach our children, it's to teach our children so that our children can be educated* ***and to know what is right and what is wrong****. And to go forward with their education*." (L)

"*I don't expect too much* (from the teacher) *because as a mother my child when he goes to school I must tell her that you are going to school and* ***you have to behave like this and the teacher is going to give you these rules and those rules***." (E)

Most of the participants regarded teachers as professionals whose main role was to prepare their children for their school careers. Most of the mothers seemed to view themselves as playing a supporting role to the teachers, in terms of checking children's homework. In this context, it is assumed that the mothers were referring to their children's formal schooling years. The fact that the mothers do not make many comments regarding the role of early childhood development centre teachers perhaps indicates that the mothers do not view pre-school teachers as playing a significant role in their children's early literacy development.

4.4 Summary of results

The following section provides a brief summary of the main results of the study.

Three main themes emerged from the data, namely the mother as a role model, home literacy practices, and perceptions of factors relating to early literacy.

Theme one relates to the mothers' literacy habits and commitment to education. The mothers did not engage in reading for pleasure, most likely due to social circumstances, and relied mostly on the delivery of free local newspapers as reading materials. Most mothers valued education and many mothers were committed to improving their current education status. In most cases, the mothers placed a high value on education and this, most probably, resulted in their positive attitude towards literacy. Many mothers also viewed education as an escape from poverty. Theme 1 answered the first sub aim of the study, namely "What are Sesotho mothers' reading habits and attitudes towards literacy?"

Theme 2 addresses home literacy practices and the subthemes, including barriers to literacy development, reading and writing practices in the home, and resources available for early literacy development. Poverty emerged as the greatest barrier towards home literacy practices and directly influenced the resources available for early literacy development in the participants' homes. Most mothers relied mostly on a pen and paper and one or two storybooks to engage their children in early literacy activities. Two of the mothers had invested in mini chalk boards for their children's literacy development. The mothers valued their children's early literacy development and attempted to engage their children in reading and writing activities, although these activities were often limited to alphabet knowledge and the writing or copying of letters and/or numbers. Mothers used mostly imitation and repetition as strategies to engage their children in early literacy activities in the home environment. Most mothers reported using an explicit style of engagement with their children during early literacy activities which might limit their children's opportunities for meaningful interaction. Theme 2 relates directly to the sub aims "What literacy activities do Sesotho mothers engage their children in?" and "What literacy resources do the children have access to in their homes?"

Theme 3 addresses mothers' perceptions of early literacy and factors affecting the development thereof. Five sub themes were identified, namely: the perception of education as key to a better life, perceptions of differences between certain groups of people with regards to literacy, perceptions of the development of literacy, and lastly the role of the mother and the role of the teacher with regards to early literacy development. The mothers viewed education as an escape from the circumstances

of poverty they were accustomed to. The mothers felt that literacy development commenced at around 4 or 5 years of age and were not of the opinion that their children should receive literacy exposure from a young(er) age. The mothers viewed themselves as playing a supporting role towards the teacher, whom they regarded as the professional with the appropriate skills to teach literacy.

Theme 3 relates directly to the study's sub aims, "What are Sesotho mothers' perceptions regarding the development of literacy in pre-school children aged 4-6 years?" and "What are Sesotho mothers' attitudes towards their children's education?" The researcher also attempted to address the sub aim, "What are Sesotho mothers' perceptions regarding the relationship between culture and literacy?" The researcher had difficulty in eliciting such responses from the participants and is of the opinion that the data does not describe the participants' perceptions on this issue in sufficient depth. However, some participants reflected upon the gender inequality within the Sotho culture in the past, and commented that these cultural beliefs have evolved and gender inequality with regards to education is no longer a concern. The participants shared the belief that the Sotho culture had a passion for literacy and embraced the skills of reading and writing, believing that these skills could improve their quality of life. The participants also shared their perceptions regarding differences relating to early literacy among Black and White; and rich and poor people. Many participants commented on the positive changes that have occurred in South Africa, post-apartheid, highlighting the fact that education opportunities are equal for all race and cultural groups. Although the participant's perceptions were conflicting, many participants viewed literacy as an escape from poverty. However, some participants also felt that children who did not grow up in poverty did not value the role of literacy in their lives and perhaps took their education for granted.

4.5 General Discussion

The main aim of the study was to describe and explain a group of Sesotho mothers', from a low socio-economic group in the Free State, perceptions regarding early literacy.

A range of perceptions of factors relating to early literacy was identified in the data. Mothers viewed education, which is directly influenced by literacy skills, as a means to escape poverty and live a better life. The mothers were confident that education could provide this change in social circumstances for their children. Most mothers held high aspirations and expectations for their children's futures. Unfortunately, the mothers had few resources and limited knowledge in the area of early literacy development which influenced their home literacy practices. The results seem to support the observation that when mothers are faced with poverty their focus is likely to be aimed at

meeting the basic needs of their children such as food, housing and health (Hammer, 1998 as cited in Ball et al, 2014). Thus, their children's development may be of secondary importance in high stress situations of severe financial constraints. Research also indicates that parents living in poverty may not have the social and physical conditions available to support early literacy development and education (Neuman, 2001) which relates directly to the situation the participants in the current study described; their circumstances reflecting limited access to knowledge, resources and support. A lack of opportunities for literacy practices, such as reading with children, adult role modelling of reading and talking about books have been linked to poor literacy achievement in low socio-economic settings (Kellett, 2009). These factors, which were highlighted by mothers in the interviews, place their children at risk for poor literacy development.

Although literacy resources were limited, the mothers' knowledge and perceptions of early literacy development were also limited. The mothers displayed elementary knowledge regarding the development of early literacy, in terms of the appropriate age of exposure, as well as optimal approaches to stimulate their children's development. Their approach could be described as a skills-based or explicit model, designed to target discrete (and limited) early literacy skills, rather than an embedded or holistic model focussing on the use of the environment to elicit literacy behaviours (Justice & Kaderavek, 2004). The mothers' perceptions of literacy development were consistent with their implementation of stimulation activities, which consisted mainly of alphabet knowledge activities and basic writing tasks. Previous research (Sonnenschein, Brody & Munsterman, 1997 as cited in Weigel, Martin & Bennet, 2006) indicates a link between socio-economic status and parents' perceptions regarding literacy development approaches. These researchers found that parents with low income backgrounds were more likely to implement a skills-based approach to literacy development thereby providing less exposure to early literacy in the home environment. Results from the current study are similar to those of Weigel et al. (2006).

The mothers held the perception that teachers are professionals and are better equipped than parents to perform the task of literacy instruction. However, with South Africa's poor literacy achievement rates (PIRLS, 2006; prePIRLS, 2011), the quality of training of some teachers and especially early childhood centre workers is questionable. Early childhood development centres are designed to target a range of developmental areas including emotional, cognitive, sensory, spiritual, moral, physical, social and communication foundations (ECD national report, 2014). In South Africa, only 62% of early childhood development centres have had their pre-Grade R curriculum registered with the Department of Basic Education, indicating a need for the quality of preschool instruction in South Africa to be addressed (ECD national report, 2014).

The limitations of the study, contribution of the study and recommendations for further research will now be discussed.

4.6 Limitations of the study

The main aim of the study was to describe the perceptions of a small group of Sesotho mothers, living in a low socio-economic area, regarding early literacy. Although the participants are living in what is classified as a low socio-economic area, their incomes varied drastically and it cannot be stated that all participants in the study survived on very low incomes. A possible reason for this is that although the township is classified as a low socio-economic area, and was historically an area reserved for people of colour due to South Africa's apartheid laws, many professional people of colour have chosen to remain in this area, despite having the financial means to move to other urban areas. This is regarded as a limitation in the study as the participants displayed a variety of monthly incomes, ranging from the child grant of R330 to R9100, the salary of a nursing aid. However, all the participants fulfilled the inclusion criteria and therefore no participants were excluded due to their monthly income.

Furthermore, when the data collection process began, it became apparent that the African languages Sesotho and Tswana are very closely linked and although all participants reported being Sesotho first language speakers, the interpreter identified a few transcriptions in which Sesotho and Tswana had been used interchangeably. The Sesotho and Setswana languages are closely linked with both belonging to the Bantu language (van Schalkwyk, 2002) and it is possible that these two African languages have become interlinked and can possibly no longer be identified as independent languages. This created a limitation in the study as it is possible that not all the participants were first language Sesotho speakers, although they identified themselves as first language Sesotho speakers.

Due to personal matters the original interpreter, Interpreter A (and also one of the key informants) could not continue with the entire interview process and a second interpreter was sourced after the 4th interview had been completed. This could have influenced the results since a different interaction style was used with certain participants. Also, Interpreter B who was sourced for the remaining interviews was a male and this could have created a barrier between the female participants and the interpreter. Furthermore, although the researcher and interpreter were both professionals, they came from different racial and cultural backgrounds. These differences may have created a barrier between the interviewer and interpreter. It is essential to highlight the power invested in race as a possible barrier during the interviewing process. It is possible that some

female participants were not completely at ease having a male present in the interview situation and this may have negatively affected their communication behaviour and responses to questions, particularly being participants who identified themselves as belonging to a culture which historically did not value the education of women.

Another possible limitation is that participants may have responded to the questions in a way that they felt might satisfy the researcher. Furthermore, the hospital setting where the interviews took place with a healthcare professional as an interviewer, may have created a situation where participants felt uneasy. This might have influenced their responses compared to what might have been possible in a more natural setting. There was also a power difference between the participants and the researcher, with participants coming from a low socio-economic background and most being relatively poorly educated, while the researcher was a tertiary-level educated, employed and middle-class woman. These differences could very possibly have created a power hierarchy in the interview setting, which may have influenced participants' responses. Furthermore, two of the participants were employed at the same hospital as the researcher which may have influenced their responses to an extent by answering in a manner which they thought might satisfy the researcher.

An additional limitation in the current study is that only the perceptions regarding early literacy were studied in a once-off interview in a decontextualized setting. This limitation can be addressed in a number of ways and this will be discussed later under *recommendations for future research.*
Finally, due to time and particularly resource constraints, a cross check of 20% of the translated interview transcripts by a third party was not performed. Cross checking is advised by Guest, Namey and Mitchell (2012) as a means to inspire confidence in the data. The reliability of the data could therefore have been affected. However, Interpreter B was responsible for checking his own transcriptions against the audio recording, as well as those originally made by Interpreter A. A very careful process of transcription was used by both interpreters and Interpreter B compared every transcription against the audio recording a number of times.

4.7 Contribution of the research study

The current study has made a positive contribution to the field of Speech-Language Therapy by addressing a research need unique to the South African setting. The study has implications for all professionals within the health and education sector who are involved in early childhood education, as the results indicate the need to drastically improve the quality of preschool literacy education in South Africa. For this major improvement to occur, collaboration between the health and education sectors is necessary, as well as government and policy support.

The results of the study have clinical implications for the field of speech-language therapy, in terms of the development and implementation of culturally appropriate early literacy assessment and intervention materials. Furthermore, the speech-language therapist plays a vital role in the prevention of early literacy delays, as well as the promotion of early literacy development within different cultural and linguistic groups. When working with non-mainstream populations these professional roles can best be fulfilled by gaining in-depth knowledge about the perceptions and practices of clients, and then designing and providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services.

Additionally, parent education, guidance and support are necessary in South Africa to assist with establishing constructive home literacy environments and successful early literacy development in the preschool years. Parent education, guidance and support can best be provided within the context of family-centered intervention programmes. Furthermore, the speech-language therapist plays a vital role in providing support and guidance to early childhood educators regarding early literacy development. However, ongoing research is required in the early literacy field in order for such intervention programmes to be successfully implemented in South African early childhood development centers.

4.8 Recommendations for further research

Research in the area of parental perceptions regarding early literacy development is limited in South Africa. It is recommended that this study be repeated, on a larger scale, with first language speakers of all eleven official languages in South Africa. This is likely to provide valuable information pertaining to the parental perceptions of early literacy in all linguistic groups in South Africa. Of particular importance are the early literacy perceptions within the groups of South Africans which represent the different African languages and who are classified as having a low socio-economic status, since research has demonstrated that children of such parents seem to be at risk for compromised literacy achievement.

An additional recommendation is that the study should be expanded to a more naturalistic setting which can provide valuable data pertaining to the perceptions, as well as the practices of early literacy in specific linguistic and/or cultural groups. Qualitative and long-term studies which are truly ethnographic would offer valuable data pertaining to the perceptions and practices of early literacy within specific linguistic and/or cultural groups. It is therefore recommended that an observational study be conducted; where participants are observed with their children, and interviewed, over longer periods of time and also in their home environments.

Future research should also focus on parental perceptions and practices, with the view of collecting data to assist with identifying appropriate intervention strategies and contribute to the design of appropriate intervention programmes for the diverse linguistic and cultural groups in South Africa.

Furthermore, research in South Africa is needed which investigates the links between perceptions and practices of early literacy and certain social demographics, such as maternal education, parental marital status and socio-economic status. These links can assist with identifying at-risk populations and preventing literacy difficulties rather than identifying problems and having to intervene. Once the relationship between early literacy and such demographic data is established, the appropriate intervention materials can be designed and implemented from an early age. Such intervention strategies do not replace or minimize the importance of large-scale programmes that address the education and socio-economic needs of South African children. The current study examined the perceptions of early literacy of a group of Sesotho mothers who had passed at least Grade 7; thus this group of mothers was not illiterate. In fact, all participants were educated up to a Grade 9 level, with 5 participants having passed their Grade 12 year. Valuable information may be obtained if the study is repeated in a setting with illiterate parents as perceptions may vary according to educational level.

In addition, the perceptions and practices of early literacy among early childhood development educators should be investigated to gain information regarding preschool children's early literacy exposure in South African day care centers, crèches and preschools. The perceptions and practices of foundation phase teachers can also be investigated. It is crucial to gain information pertaining to the education setting since South African children are continually scoring below average on reading measures in comparison to their international peers.

4.9 Conclusion

In South Africa, little research exists on the parental perceptions of early literacy in various cultural-linguistic groups. This study attempted to describe, explain and interpret the perceptions of early literacy among a group of Sesotho mothers, who have a low socio-economic status. The main research question was, "What are the perceptions of mothers, from a low socio-economic group in the Free State, on early literacy?" To answer the main research question, several sub aims were created. The sub aims were as follows:

1.) What are the mothers' reading habits and attitudes towards literacy?

2.) What are the mothers' perceptions regarding the development of literacy in their pre-school children aged 4-6 years?
3.) What are the mothers' perspectives regarding the relationship between culture and early literacy?
4.) What are the mothers' attitudes towards their children's education?

The study was guided by an ethnographic approach. Data was collected using a standardised open-ended interview, combined with an interview guide approach. Purposeful and snowball sampling were utilised to recruit participants for the study. Data were analysed using a thematic analysis approach, as inspired by Braun & Clarke (2006).

Three main themes were identified in the data, namely mothers as role models, home literacy practices and mothers' perceptions of factors relating to early literacy. It was apparent that the mothers valued education highly, viewing it as an escape from poverty. Although children were exposed to some adult literacy behaviours in their homes, the exposure was limited and reading for pleasure was not an activity that adults engaged in. The mothers' perceptions regarding early literacy development reflected a skills-based, explicit approach which was evident in their reported home literacy practices consisting mainly of alphabet knowledge- and writing activities. The mothers' knowledge regarding the developmental process of literacy was most likely influenced by their skills-based approach to literacy, since most mothers associated literacy development with a specific age (4-5 years) and the ability to copy written letters and recite the alphabet, rather than viewing literacy as a developmental process commencing with incidental learning in the early years and culminating in the foundation phase school years with explicit learning opportunities. The mothers also held the perception that teachers were the professionals qualified to teach literacy and were better able to perform the teaching role.

The results from the study have wide-ranging implications for individuals, practitioners, educational institutions and government structures. Professionals such as speech-language therapists and others working within the early childhood development field should be involved at the ground level, identifying children at risk for delays in literacy development and implementing appropriate interventions to address this. One of the primary roles of a speech-language therapist is the prevention of speech- and language delays and/or disorders and the promotion of normal communication development. Speech-language intervention includes involvement in the primary health care facilities and early childhood development centers in South Africa, particularly in rural and impoverished populations, where the risk factors for poor literacy development and poor scholastic achievement are high. The speech-language therapist's role includes the culturally

sensitive promotion of early literacy development in high risk populations, as well as the implementation of culturally, linguistically and economically appropriate and family-centered intervention programmes in the health and education sector. The collaboration of the health and education sectors is required for intervention strategies to be successful, and therefore the partnership between speech-language therapists and teachers is crucial.

On a macro level, government departments including Social Development, Basic Education and Health each play a key role in the promotion of early literacy and better education and living conditions for all South Africans. Without these individual, institutional and governmental efforts in place, the poor literacy achievement in South Africa will not improve.

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APPENDIX A

Relevant Biographical Information

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

Cellphone Nr: _____

First language: _____

Second language: _____

Highest grade passed at school: _____

Nr of children: _____

Age of children: _____

Nr of rooms in house: _____

Nr of people living in house: _____

Mother's income: _____

Mother/father relationship: _____

APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITEIT·STELLENBOSCH·UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

MAILED

Miss L.E. Botha
Speech-Language and Hearing Therapy
4th Floor Teaching Block
Tygerberg Campus

Dear Miss Botha

ETHICS REFERENCE NO: N10/05/140 20 January 2011

A panel of the Health Research Ethics Committee reviewed this project on 10 May 2010; the above project was approved on condition that further information is submitted.

This information was supplied and the project was finally approved on 20 January 2011 for a period of one year from this date. This project is therefore now registered and you can proceed with the work.

Please quote the above-mentioned project number in ALL future correspondence. Please note that a progress report (obtainable on the website of our Division: www.sun.ac.za/rds should be submitted to the Committee before the year has expired. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly and subjected to an external audit.

Translations of the consent document in the languages applicable to the study participants should be submitted.

Federal Wide Assurance Number: 00001372

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Number: IRB0005239

The Health Research Ethics Committee complies with the SA National Health Act No.61 2003 as it pertains to health research and the United States Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Part 46. This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki, the South African Medical Research Council Guidelines as well as the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health).

Please note that for research at a primary or secondary healthcare facility permission must still be obtained from the relevant authorities (Western Cape Department of Health and/or City Health) to conduct the research as stated in the protocol. Contact persons are Ms Claudette Abrahams at Western Cape Department of Health (healthres@pgwc.gov.za Tel: +27 21 483 9907) and Dr Hélène Visser at City Health (Helene.Visser@capetown.gov.za Tel: +27 21 400 3981).

Research that will be conducted at any tertiary academic institution requires approval from the relevant hospital manager. Ethics approval is required BEFORE approval can be obtained from these health authorities.

Approval Date: 20 January 2011 Expiry Date: 20 January 2012

Fakulteit Gesondheidswetenskappe · Faculty of Health Sciences
Verbind tot Optimale Gesondheid · Committed to Optimal Health
Afdeling Navorsingsontwikkeling en -steun · Division of Research Development and Support
Posbus/PO Box 19063 · Tygerberg 7505 · Suid-Afrika/South Africa
Tel.: +27 21 938 9075 · Faks/Fax: +27 21 931 3352

RE : APPROVAL
The perceptions of mothers, who live in an informal settlement in the Free State, on early literacy

Yours faithfully

MS CARLI SAGER
RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT
Tel: +27 21 938 9140 / E-mail: carlis@sun.ac.za
Fax: +27 21 931 3352

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

The perceptions of mothers, who live in an informal settlement in the Free State, on early literacy.

REFERENCE NUMBER:

N10/05/140

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

Lyndall Botha

ADDRESS:

PO Box 26518

Langenhovenpark

Bloemfontein

9331

CONTACT NUMBER:

083 940 4521/ (051) 405 1657 (w)

You are being invited to participate in a research project. Please read the pamphlet in your own time. It will explain the details of this project. If there is anything you do not understand, please ask the research investigator. It is very important that you understand everything in the pamphlet. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary**, which means that you are not forced in any way to be involved in the project. In other words, you have the choice to participate or not to participate. If you do not want to participate, this will not affect you negatively in any way. You can also stop participating in the study at any time in the study, even if you said you would participate in the beginning.

This study has been approved by the **Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC) at Stellenbosch University**. This committee is responsible for making sure that all research projects,

like this one, are ethical and that no-one who participates is harmed in any way by the research. The project will be done according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Declaration of Helsinki, South African Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice and the Medical Research Council (MRC) Ethical Guidelines for Research.

What is this research study all about?

The research study will be done in the Bloemfontein East area. Interviews with mothers will be done at Pelonomi Tertiary Hospital in the Speech-Language Therapy Department. In this research project we want to find out what mothers think about early literacy, especially their young childrens' development of reading and writing, what reading and writing activities they do at home and how mothers feel about literacy. The research is being done so that we can understand the Sesotho culture better.

During the interviews, the researcher and the interpreter will be in the room. The researcher will start the interview in English or Afrikaans, depending on which language the mother prefers. The interpreter will be in the room to translate anything into Sesotho (and back to English for the researcher), if the mother does not understand the question or struggles to answer in Afrikaans or English. The interviews will be tape-recorded so that the researcher can listen to the mothers' answers afterwards. The mothers can ask for the tape recorder to be switched off at any time during the interview. The tape recordings will be stored at the researcher's home in Bloemfontein. The tapes will be stored for the time during which the researcher is busy with her Master's degree. Once the researcher has graduated, the recordings will be destroyed.

Why have you been invited to participate?

You have been invited to participate in the research study because you match the following criteria:

- You are living in Bloemfontein East
- You are a mother, who has one or more children between the age of 4 and 6 years old.
- You speak mostly Sesotho speakers.
- Your child is developing normally
- You have passed Grade 7.

What will your responsibilities be?

Your responsibility will be to answer questions during the interview as honestly as you can (about 1 hour).

Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

By taking part in the research study, there will be no personal benefit for you. However, by participating you can help researchers to understand what mothers believe about early literacy in the Sesotho population.

Are there any risks involved in your taking part in this research?

There are no risks involved in taking part in the research study.

Who will have access to the answers you provide the researchers during the interview?

The information collected from you during the interview will be treated as confidential. Your name will not be made known to anyone. When the interview is done, you will be given a letter of the alphabet and your name will not be mentioned on the recording. Your name will not appear in any reports or articles that might be written about this study. After the interview has been recorded, your answers will be typed out onto a computer. Once your answers are typed out on paper, your voice cannot be recognised by anyone.

Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

No, you will not be paid to take part in the study but your transport and meal costs will be covered for each study visit. In other words you will not have to pay for anything.

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

- You can phone Berna Gerber at tel (021) 938 9125 or (021) 881 3065 or Lyndall Botha at (051) 405 1657 if you have any questions or problems.
- You can contact the **Health Research Ethics Committee** at (021) 938 9207 if you are worried about anything or have problems that the researcher did not help you with.
- You will be given a copy of this information and consent form.

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I ……..……. agree to take part in a research study entitled *Mothers' perceptions regarding early literacy in an informal settlement in the Free State*

I declare that:

- I have read or had read to me this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** (my own decision) and I have not been forced, in any way to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be treated badly in any way because of it.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the study doctor or researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) .....…..…….. on (*date*) ……...…….. 2015.

....

Signature of participant **Signature of witness**

Declaration by investigator

I *(name)* ……..…… declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to ……..
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.

- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did/did not use an interpreter. (*If an interpreter is used then the interpreter must sign the declaration below.*

Signed at (*place*) .....…..…….. on (*date*) ……...…….. 2015.

....

Signature of investigator **Signature of witness**

Declaration by interpreter

I *(name)* ……..…… declare that:

- I assisted the investigator (*name*) ……. to explain the information in this document to (*name of participant*) ……..…….. using the language medium of Sesotho.
- We encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I conveyed a factually correct version of what was related to me.
- I am satisfied that the participant fully understands the content of this informed consent document and has had all his/her question satisfactorily answered.

Signed at (*place*) .....…..…….. on (*date*) ……...……..

....

Signature of interpreter **Signature of witness**

APPENDIX D

PAMPITSHANA YA TLHAHISOLESEDING LE FOROMO YA PHANO YA TUMELO YA MONKAKAROLO

THAETLELE YA PROJEKE YA PATLISISO:

Maikutlo a bomme ba phelang dibakeng tsa mekhukhu Foreistata mabapi le ho bala le ho ngola ha motheo.

NOMORO YA REFERENSE:
N10/05/140

MOFUPUTSI YA KA SEHLOOHONG:
Lyndall Botha

ATERESE:
PO Box 26518
Langenhovenpark
Bloemfontein
9331

NOMORO YA BOIKOPANYO:
083 940 4521/(051) 405 1079 (w)

O memelwa ho nka karolo phuputsong ya boithuto. Ka kopo bala pampitshana ena ka nako ya hao. E tla o hlalosetsa dintlha tse mabapi le projeke ena. Haeba ho na le letho leo o sa le utlwisiseng, ka kopo botsa mofuputsi (Mof L Botha). Ho bohlokwa haholo hore o utlwisise dintho tsohle tse pamitshaneng ena. Hape, bonkarolo ba hao ke ba **boithaopo ka ho phethahala**, e leng se bolelang hore ha o tlamellwe ka tsela efe kapa efe hore o kenele projeke ena. Ka mantswe a mang, o na le kgetho ya ho nka karolo kapa ho se nke karolo. Haeba o sa batle ho nka karolo, sena se ke ke sa o ama hampe ka tsela efe kapa efe. Hape o ka emisa ho nka karolo phuputsong ka nako efe kapa efe, leha eba o ne o itse o batla ho nka karolo qalong.

Phuputso ena e fuwe tumello ke ba **Komiti ya Melao ya Tsehebetso ya Dipatlisiso tsa Bophelo (Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC)) Yunivesithing ya Stellenbosch**. Komiti ena e etsa

bonnete ba hore diprojeke tsohle tsa patlisiso, jwalo ka ena, di etswa ho latela melao ya thebetso le hore bankakarolo ha ba lematswe ka tsela efe kapa efe ke patlisiso. Projeke ena e tla etswa ho latela melawana ya tataiso ya le maano a Phatlalatso ya matjhaba ya Helsinki (international Declaration of Helsinki), Melawana ya Afrika Borwa ya Tshebetso ya Bongaka e Nepahetseng (South African Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice) le Lekgotla la Dipatlisiso tsa Bongaka (Medical Research Council (MRC)) le Ditataiso tsa Tshebetso e Molaong tsa Dipatlisiso (Ethical Guidelines for Research).

Diphuputso tsee tsa boithuto di mabapi le eng?

Patlisiso ya boithuto e tla etswa Setjhabeng sa Bloemfontein. Dipuisano le bomme di tla etswa Pelonomi Regional Hospital Lefapheng la Kalafo ya Puo. Projekeng ena ya patlisiso re batla ho fumana hore na bomme ba nahana eng mabapi le ho bala le ho ngola ha motheo, haholoholo:

- seo bomme ba se nahanang mabapi le ka moo bana ba bona ba ithutang ho bala le ho ngola,
- hore ke ho bala le ho ngola hofe tse etswang ke bomme lapeng mmoho le bana ba bona le
- hore bomme ba ikutlwa jwang mabapi le ho bala le ho ngola.

Patlisiso e etswa hore re kgone ho utlwisisa tsela eo bomme ba buang Sesotho ba nahanang ka yona mabapi le ho bala le ho ngola ha bana ba bona.

Nakong ya dipuisano, mofuputsi le toloko ba tla ba teng ka phapusing. Mofuputsi o tla qala ka ho botsa dipotso ka Senyesemane kapa seAfrikaanse, ho ipapisitse le hore kgetho ya hae ya puo ke efe. Toloko e tla ba teng ka phapusing ho fetolela eng kapa eng puong ya Sesotho (le ho kgutlela ho Senyesemane bakeng sa mofuputsi), haeba mme a sa utlwisise kapa a sokola ho araba ka seAfrikaanse kapa Senyesemane. Dipuisano di tla hatiswa e le hore mofuputsi a kgone ho mamela dikarabo tsa mme ka morao. Bomme ba ka kopa hore dihatisi tsa lentswe di tingwe ka nako efe kapa efe ya puisano. Dikgatiso tsa lentswe di tla bolokwa lapeng la mofuputsi Bloemfontein. Dikgatiso di tla bolokwa bakeng sa nako eo mofuputsi a ntseng a phathahane ho sebetsana le phuputso. Ha phuputso e phethilwe mme mofuputsi a amohetse kgerata ya hae dikgatiso tseo di tla senngwa.

Ke hobaneng o memilwe hore o nke karolo?

O memilwe ho nka karolo projekeng ya phuputso ya boithuto hobane.

- O phela Bloemfontein.
- O mme, ya nang le ngwana kapa bana ba dilemo tse dipakeng tsa 4 le 6.
- O bua haholo puo ya Sesotho.
- Ngwana wa hao o ntse a hola hantle.
- Wena o pasitse Mophato wa bo-8.

Maikarabello a hao e tla ba afe?

Boikarabello ba hao e tla ba ho araba dipotso nakong ya puisano ka nnete yohle eo o ka e kgonang (puisano e tla nka nako e ka bang hora e 1).

Na o tla fumana molemo ho nkeng karolo ha hao diphuputsong tsee?

Ha ho molemo o tlang ka kotloloho ho wena ka ho nka karolo phuputsong ena ya boithuto. Leha ho le jwalo, ka ho nka karolo o ka thusa bafuputsi ho utlwisisa seo bomme ba se dumelang mabapi le tsebo ya ho bala le ho ngola hara setjhaba sa batho ba buang Sesotho. Tlhahisoleseding ena e ka re thusa ho utlwisisa bomme le bana hantle le ho feta le ho ba thusa ka tsela e ntlafetseng mabapi le ho ithuta ho bala le ho ngola.

Na ho na le dikotsi dife kapa dife tse ka bang teng mabapi le ho nka karolo ha hao patlisisong ee?

Ha ho dikotsi tse teng ka lebaka la ho nka karolo phuputsong ena ya boithuto.

Ke mang ya tla kgona ho mamela kapa ho bala dikarabo tseo o faneng ka tsona nakong ya puisano?

Dikarabo tseo o faneng ka tsona nakong ya puisano di tla tshwarwa ka sephiri. Ha ho motho e mong ntle le mofuputsi ya tla tseba lebitso la hao. Ho fapana le lebitso la hao mofuputsi o tla sebedisa letere ya alefabete (e seng letere eo lebitso la hao le qalang ka yona) ho tshwaya kgatiso (theipi) ya hao le puisano. Lebitso la hao le ke ke la ngolwa ditlalehong dife kapa dife kapa dingolweng tse

mabapi le phuputso ena. Ka mora hore puisano e rekotwe, dikarabo tsa hao di tla thaepuwa khomphuteng. Hang ha dikarabo tsa hao di thaepilwe pampiring, lentswe la hao le ke ke la lemohuwa ke mang kapa mang. Lebitso la hao le ke ke la ba pampiring e thapilweng dikarabo tsa hao.

Na o tla lefuwa bakeng sa ho nka karolo diphuputsong mme na ho na le ditjeo tse amehang?
Tjhe, o ke ke wa lefuwa hore o nke karolo phuputsong empa ditjeo tsa hao tsa dipalangwang le dijo di tla lefuwa bakeng sa ketelo ka nngwe ya phuputso. Ka mantswe a mang o ke ke wa lokela ho lefella letho.

Na ho na le letho le leng leo o hlokang ho le tseba kapa ho le etsa?

- O ka letsetsa Berna Gerber nomorong ya mohala ya (021) 938 9125 kapa (021) 881 3065 kapa Lyndall Botha ho (051) 405 1079 haeba o na le dipotso dife kapa dife kapa mathata.
- O ka ikopanya le ba **Komiti ya Melao ya Tshebetso Dipatlisisong tsa Bophelo** ho (021) 938 9207 haeba o ngongorehile mabapi le eng kapa eng kapa o na le mathata ao mofuputsi a sa o thusang ka wona.
- O tla fuwa khopi ya leqephe lena la tlhahisoleseding le foromo ya tumelo.

Tlhapanyo ya monkakarolo

Ka ho saena ka tlase mona, Nna ……..……. ke dumela ho nka karolo patlisisong e bitswang *Maikutlo a bomme mabapi le ho bala le ho ngola ha motheo sebakeng sa mekhukhu Foreistata*
Ke ikana mona hore:

- Ke badile kapa ke baletswe tlhahisoleseding ena le foromo ya phano ya tumelo le hore e ngotswe ka leleme leo ke le tsebang hantle mme ke phutholohileng ka lona.
- Ke bile le monyetla wa ho botsa dipotso mme dipotso tsa ka di arabilwe ka kgotsofatso.
- Ke utlwisisa hore ho nka karolo phuputsong ena ke ka **boithaopo** (ke qeto ya ka) mme ha ke a tlamellwa, ka tsela efe kapa efe hore ke nkise ngwana wa ka karolo.
- Nka nna ka kgetha ho tswa phuputsong ka nako efe kapa efe mme nke ke ka tshwarwa hampe ka tsela efe kapa efe ka lebaka la hona.

- Nka nna ka kotjwa ho tswa phuputsong pele e fihla pheletsong haeba ngaka ya phuputso kapa mofuputsi a bona ho le molemong wa ngwana wa ka, kapa haeba ke sa latele moralo wa phuputso, jwalo ka ha o dumellanwe.

E saenetswe *(sebaka)* .....…..…….. ka la *(mohla)*……...…….. 2015.

....

Tshaeno ya monkakarolo **Tshaeno ya paki**

Boikano ba mofuputsi

Nna (*lebitso)* ……..…… ke hlapanya mona hore:

- Ke hlalositse tlhahisoleseding e tokomaneng ena ho ……..
- Ke mo kgothaleditse ho botsa dipotso mme ka ipha nako ho di araba.
- Ke kgotsofetse hore o utlwisisa ho lekana dintlha tsohle tsa patlisiso ena, jwalo ka ha ho hlalositswe ka hodimo mona
- Ke sebedisitse/ha ke a sebedisa toloko. (*Haeba toloko e sebedisitswe, toloko eo e tlameha ho saena tlhapanyo e ka tlase mona.*

E saenetswe *(sebaka)* .....…..…….. ka la *(mohla)*……...…….. 2015.

....

Tshaeno ya mofuputsi **Tshaeno ya paki**

Tlhapanyo ya toloko

Nna (*lebitso)* ……..…… ke hlapanya mona hore:

- Ke thusitse mofuputsi (*lebitso*) ……. Ho hlalosa tlhahisoleseding e tokomaneng ena ho (*lebitso la monkakarolo*) ……..…….. ka ho sebedisa puo ya Sesotho.
- Re mo kgothaleditse ho botsa dipotso mme ra ipha nako ho di araba.
- Ke fetisitse ka nnete polelo e nepahetseng ya seo ke se boleletsweng.
- Ke kgotsofetse hore monkakarolo o utlwisisa ka botlalo dikateng tsa tokomane ena ya tumelo e nang le kutlwisiso mme dipotso tsohle tsa hae di arabilwe ka botlalo.

E saenetswe *(sebaka)* .....….....…….. ka la *(mohla)*

……...……..

....

Tshaeno ya toloko **Tshaeno ya paki**

APPENDIX E

Interview Guide

Area 1: Primary caregiver's schooling, literacy abilities and literacy habits

1.) When did you learn to read and write?

2.) Who taught you to read and write?

3.) What was the highest grade that you completed at school? Tell me about the training you completed after school.

4.) Please tell me about the things you read at home and at work. (What do you read?)

5.) Please tell me about the things you use writing for in everyday life.

6.1) Have you ever visited the library?

6.2) If yes, please tell me about the(se) visit(s)?

Area 2: Development of reading and writing

1.) How do you think a child learns to read and write?

2.) When should children begin to learn to read and write?

3. Who do you think should teach children to read and write?

Follow-up questions:

4.) Do you think that mothers should help their children to learn to read and write?

5.) If yes: How can mothers help their children to learn to read and write?

6.) Who else must help children to learn to read and write?

7.) Do teachers at school play a role in teaching your child to read and write?

7.1) If yes, what is the role of the teacher?

Area 3: Home literacy environment

1.) Please tell me about all of the reading that happens in your home. (all members of the home)

2.) Please tell me about all the writing that happens in your home. (all members in the home)

2.) Who reads and writes at your home? (Only ask if poor response to Question 1)

3.) What do you use when you and your children read and write? (What materials do you use?)

4.) Please explain to me how you and your children read and write together.

Area 4: Culture, literacy and education

1.) Do you think different people in South Africa think differently about reading and writing? Please tell me about these differences.

2.1) Do you think there are differences in how **black people and white people** think about reading and writing?

2.2) What are these differences?

3.1) Do you think there are differences in how **rich people and poor people** think about reading and writing?

3.2) What are these differences?

4.1) Do you think there are differences in how **old people and young people** think about reading and writing?

4.2) What are these differences?

5.1) Do you think there are differences in how **teachers and parents** think about reading and writing?

5.2) What are these differences?

6.1) What do the Sesotho people believe about reading and writing?

6.2) What does the Sotho culture CURRENTLY believe about reading and writing?

6.3) What did the culture believe about reading and writing in the PAST? (Is there a difference between past and present?)

Area 5: Parents' attitudes towards literacy and education

1.) How do you feel about your child's education?

2.) What do you believe education can do for your child?

3.) What do you want for your children when they are grown up? (What is your dream for your child?)

4.) What is necessary to make this happen?

5.) Do you think your children will achieve these dreams? Why / why not?

APPENDIX F

Interpreter Training

The following is an outline of the material to be used for the interpreter training. The training will take on the form of a discussion (based on the topics outlined in this document), rather than a traditional teacher-student situation. The interpreter will be free to ask questions and explore relevant topics that are not included in the material.

Communication

Definition: Communication is the active two-way process of conveying a message by encoding, transmitting and decoding information to create a shared meaning with one's communication partner. Communication can be achieved through signing; writing and reading and also speech and listening. Speech and language (the linguistic code) form only a part of the communication process. Amongst others, paralinguistic and nonlinguistic codes are components of communication. Paralinguistic communication includes intonation, stress, rate and pausing – these elements are used to convey attitude and emotion during communication. Nonlinguistic cues, including gestures, posture, eye contact, facial expression and physical distance can transmit messages without relying on speech and language (Owens, 2001).

According to the Shannon-Weaver Model of Communication consists of the following components:

- The source
- Encoder
- Message
- Channel
- Noise
- Decoder
- Receiver
- Feedback

The source of communication is the initiator (starter or origin), that puts the model into action. It is an individual or group that has a specific reason to begin the communication process. That is, there is a message that they wish another to receive.

The Encoder takes place when a message is recreated in a format that is understood by others for later interpretation. Eg. Speech or writing.

The message identifies the communicator's thoughts (already placed in an understandable format) and ideas and links the communicator and the receiver of the message.

The channel is the medium through which the message moves. Eg. Verbal, written, electronic or any other medium.

Noise refers to anything which interferes with or distorts the initial message and therefore influences what the communicators should have received. Noise can be physical, as in an actual sound that muffles the message as it is being spoken, or it can be language-based, like if the vocabulary used within the message is beyond the understanding of the recipient. In order for communication to be effective, noise must be reduced.

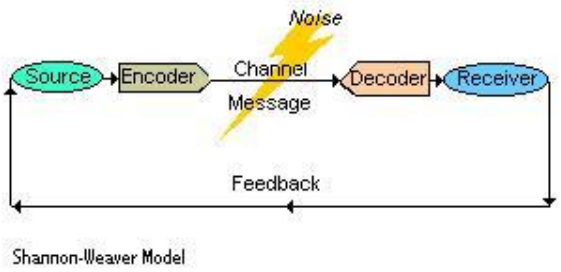
Decoding is the process whereby the recipient interprets and attaches meaning to the message. Before the message reaches the intended recipient, it must be decoded, or interpreted, from its original form into one that the receiver understands.

The receiver is the person who receives the message. Eg. The public

Feedback relates to the source whether their message has been received, and most importantly, if it has been interpreted accurately. Without feedback, the source would never know if the communication was successful. Ongoing communication is made possible by continuous feedback.

Shannon & Weaver 1949

The Model



Shannon-Weaver Model

http://www.uri.edu/artsci/lsc/Faculty/Carson/508/03Website/Hayden/ShanWeav.html

The interpreted interview

.It must be remembered that the interpreted interview creates a situation where communication takes place within a triangle and two of the individuals present cannot communicate with each other (participant and speech therapist). It is therefore possible that alliances can be formed within the

triangle (Swartz, 1998). The interpreter may feel close to the participant due to them speaking the same language. There may also be a closeness between the interpreter and interviewer as they are both professionals.

Technical aspects of interpreting

It is essential that the interpreter and therapist are aware of the clinical interpreting triangle and that they work hard together to provide the most effective and accurate information and service to the client. The interpreter's role also needs to be understood well. The following explains the different views of the interpreter's role currently available in the literature.

The *invisible interpreter*- in this role the interpreter acts as a channel between the participant and clinician. The interpreter should be invisible and is expected to remove the labels from one language and attach them to another language (Swartz 1998).

The interpreter may be expected to act as a *culture broker*- assessing whether the participant's beliefs are in keeping with the cultural group they come from and making assessments of the participant's behaviour during the interview.

The interpreter as *junior colleague*: the interpreter is someone who has had training in healthcare and brings their own skills to the interpreting task. In this case the interpreter's opinion is highly valued. During the interview, the interviewer and interpreter have the freedom to discuss what the participant is saying and how to approach the remainder of the interview.

When the interpreter is viewed as a *client advocate*, their sole responsibility is to tend to the interests of the client as the clients are in a far less powerful position than the interviewer (Swartz 1998).

(Discuss with the interpreter what the most appropriate interpreter role would be for the purposes of the qualitative interviews)

Common interpreting errors

1.) Omission: The interpreter leaves out part or all of the message said by the clinician or participant.

2.) Addition: The interpreter adds to what the speaker has already said.

3.) Condensation: The interpreter summarizes what has been said according to her own views.

4.) Substitution: The interpreter replaces something that has been said by something not said.

Perhaps include here:

Discuss with the interpreter how such errors can be avoided. E.g. the therapist should not use questions that are too long for the Interpreter to remember. If the interpreter is unsure of what the therapist / participant means she should ask for clarification etc.

Improving interpreted interviews

1.) *Preparation*

The interpreter and interviewer must ensure that they understand their role during the interview and also share the same goals for the interview (Swartz 1998).

2.) *Introducing the interview*

The participant must be informed about the purpose of the interview and the course it will take. An explanation of the role of the interpreter is necessary. It is preferable that the introduction be done by the interpreter in the participant's home language.

3.*) Conducting the interview*

The interviewer should speak directly to the participant, never asking third-person questions. This is more respectful and increases rapport (Swartz 1998). It may be necessary at various points during the interview to clarify to the participant how the interview is progressing.

4.) Discussions after the interview

Swartz (1998) suggests that if possible, the interpreter and interviewer should discuss the interview directly afterwards, but due to safety issues at the place of the interview, it was recommended by colleagues of the interpreter to rather schedule another time for discussion (as soon as possible after the interview was conducted).

Advice from an Interpreter

(Ozzie Diaz-Duque, 1982)

- Being bilingual does not qualify a person to be an interpreter
- This misconception leads healthcare workers to recruit patient's family, friends and other patients to interpret

- Reasons: (1) Friends and family do not have a healthcare background, (2) they are not familiar with hospital policies, procedures and routines, and (3) may violate confidentiality
- For healthcare workers to work effectively with interpreters, they need to know the kinds of problems interpreters have, and also what to expect from them

Principles of Good Interpreting

Register

- Defined as the social/intellectual level at which language is placed
- Interpreter must be able to determine the participant's register and communicate with him on that level→ prevents the "nodding syndrome" – participant nods in agreement out of fear of embarrassment
- Some patients (participants) have complete absence of register with certain subjects
- Remember: socio-economic status and level of education alone do not determine the participant's register. Also determined by situation, the parties involved, the place and nature of conversation

Professional Jargon

- Healthcare providers seem to speak jargon (terminology specific to a certain profession, activity or group of people)
- Health professional should use simpler language

Polishing

- In most instances, translation to the interviewer should remain in the patient's register (social/intellectual level of speaking), especially when the professional (researcher) wants some idea of the participant's perception of a problem, state of mind, educational background, self-image or attitude toward health
- Meanings can be misinterpreted or totally lost if the interpreter polishes the participant's language
- It is therefore expected that the interpreter translates the participant's exact words to the interviewer in order to obtain the participant's perceptions and attitudes towards early literacy.

Fear

- Interferes with a person's ability to communicate and receive a message

- Participants often feel more comfortable speaking through an interpreter about delicate subjects (eg. family planning)
- The possibility of fear during the interview needs to be accepted by both the interviewer and interpreter and handled with sensitivity.

Non-verbal Communication

- Effective interpreting takes into account non-verbal factors such as nuances, intonation patterns and facial expressions
- The interviewer should also pay attention to the participant's behavior, way of speaking, movements of his / her face and must listen to the participant's language. The researcher should ask the interpreter about behavior that she did not understand. E.g. "Why do you think the mother did not want to look at me when I asked about her school history?"